

Every Traveller Needs a Compass: Travel and Collecting in Egypt

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Compass. Travel
Collecting in Egypt**

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EVERY TRAVELLER NEEDS A COMPASS

Travel and Collecting in Egypt and the Near East



Edited by
NEIL COOKE and VANESSA DAUBNEY

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Front cover: Near Nadur, 23 March 1866, 2.30 pm, by Edward Lear. Private Collection.

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Introduction

Neil Cooke

The nucleus of people who became ASTENE first came together in 1995 at a Bankes Symposium at Kingston Lacy organised by the late T. G. H. ('Harry') James – our first president. A few weeks' later, dozens more people from around the world gathered in Durham to attend a conference bearing the title Travellers to Egypt. As a result of the interest generated, two years later, a similar conference was held in Oxford, where those attending agreed that it would be a good idea to create an Association for the Study of Travel in Egypt and the Near East. Thus, ASTENE was born, and the first conference in this new guise took place at Cambridge in 1999.

The purpose of ASTENE is to act as a forum for discussing and sharing the research and discoveries of its members; in particular, those aspects connected with the lives and journeys of the men and women who travelled to Egypt and the Near East throughout all periods of history and for a variety of reasons. Twenty years on, the purpose of ASTENE remains the same, except there is less concentration on travellers going to Egypt and the Near East from Western Europe and North America. In recent years, members have brought to light travellers visiting the region from East European countries, from Russia and elsewhere as people sought to understand the world outside their borders. It is recognised that travellers from India and further east visited Egypt and the Near East as an extension to their pilgrimage to Mecca. It is also now known that, over the course of two centuries, English men and women making the return journey home after a period of time working and living in India would stop over in Egypt and other parts of the Ottoman Empire. Those who had been soldiers would make use of their training in making drawings and watercolours of fortifications and terrain during a reconnaissance mission to create an illustrated record of the landscape and monuments of the countries they visited. Often, these records can be matched with contemporary written descriptions to paint a more vivid picture of places and events that have passed down the generations in oral histories and family stories.

Travelling was not all one way, and it is now realised that many Arabs from Egypt and parts of the Near East made visits to European countries and elsewhere, often to study or train in order to return home with knowledge that would benefit their economies and improve the lives of their fellow citizens. Occasionally, people would travel to Europe as members of a performing theatre group or as a trusted servant. Generally, the details of their journeys and experiences are only to be found in European libraries and archives. What is now being discovered is of increasing value to those studying social history in countries where there are few written or illustrated records of such travellers and their journeys.

This, the eleventh volume in a growing corpus of knowledge, is a collection of papers from the ASTENE Conference held at Aston University, Birmingham, over the weekend of 12–15 July 2013. Once again, the range of subjects and periods covered by the papers was wide and varied, and those selected for publication have been chosen because they bring something new about the people from many countries and backgrounds who travelled to, from and within Egypt and the Near East, either singly or as a group, and explored, observed and recorded, or stayed for a short period of time to improve their health or simply to enjoy the experience.

While some travellers kept a diary or journal that has survived until today, others did not. Their travels have to be extracted from the wide range of manuscript sources that are thankfully retained in libraries and archives, or which still remain with their descendants. Sometimes, the name of a traveller is only contained in a few words within a single piece of correspondence or journal entry, yet from such small beginnings and through detective work to link the chance meetings between travellers with a location, or news of a shared event, it is often possible to chart part of a traveller's journey and bring to life a person who has long been forgotten. It is often these minor characters and their travails that prove to be of interest to ASTENE members because they often bring a new perspective to well-known places and events.

The first paper, by Sonia Anderson, is an example of how tenacious detective work carried out over a period of time can add further layers to the life of a person. Sir John Young (1807–76) was sent by the British government to be High Commissioner for the Ionian Islands in 1855. While the end of his time in Ionia is recorded in official government documents, his own private Letter Books for the period are missing, except that covering the years 1856–57 which now only survives in the form of a typescript, as the original manuscript probably no longer exists. By taking this single Letter Book and locating what has survived from the other half of the correspondence,

it has been possible to gain a better understanding of the events taking place in the public and private life of Sir John Young while in Ionia and just prior to his appointment as Governor of New South Wales in Australia.

While in the Ionian Islands, Sir John Young met the artist Edward Lear (1812–88), who gave sketching lessons to Lady Young. Lear is the subject of a paper by Joseph Attard-Tabone who has a long-held interest in artists who visited the island of Malta. Lear visited the island six times, but his most productive period was between December 1865 and April 1866, when he could no longer be diverted from his drawing and painting by his many friends on the island because they were travelling elsewhere. Attended by his servant Giorgio Kokali, Lear spent several weeks making over 80 drawings and watercolours of the landscape and coastline of the small nearby island of Gozo. Today, the work he created during this short period of artistic activity is scattered among museums and galleries worldwide.

The Finnish Orientalist Georg August Wallin (1811–52) is the subject of Patricia Berg's paper. Wallin travelled in Egypt, on the Arabian Peninsula and through parts of the Ottoman Empire during the years 1843–49. Wallin had an interest in collecting material about Arab tribes and Arabic dialects, principally the differences between the classical and modern forms and uses of the language, which few people had studied until then. Wallin is amongst the handful of travellers up to this date to visit Medina and Mecca. While travelling in Arabia, he was careful not to take notes in case his actions aroused any suspicion among the local Bedouin and cost him his life. Wallin waited until his return to Cairo before writing about the journey in a letter to his former tutor at Helsinki University.

The paper by Don Boyer about William John Bankes (1786–1855) and Charles Barry (1795–1860) is one that compares material now retained in different archival collections and considers the different contributions each man made towards recording the ruins of Gerasa in drawings. A problem arises from the fact that the number of drawings made by Barry is quite out of proportion to the two days he spent at the site when compared with what was accomplished during the 11 days spent by Bankes on three separate visits. Both men employed several helpers to assist with the surveying, including Charles Irby, James Mangles and James Silk Buckingham. When Bankes decided to publish, not everybody was happy for their work to be used, and the drawings became evidence in the Action for Libel in the Case of Buckingham versus Bankes that was tried at the Court of King's Bench, London, in 1826.

Jean-Jacques Rifaud (1786–1852) is the subject of the paper by Marie-Cécile Bruwier. Rifaud arrived in Egypt in 1814 and spent many

years excavating all over the country, first working directly for Drovetti, the French Consul, and later on his own, principally in the Delta, which few people had then studied. On his return to Europe in 1827, Rifaud went back to Marseilles where he was born, and sought the help of the city authorities to establish a museum of Egyptian antiquities, natural history, and contemporary daily life. This was to be filled with his own collection of ancient and modern artefacts, herbaria, birds and insects, plus the 6000 drawings he made in Egypt. Sadly, the city showed no interest and his collections are now dispersed in museums and archives across Europe.

A life sadly cut short, is the subject of a joint paper by Ross Irving and Margaret Maitland. Although Alexander Henry Rhind (1833–63) is more generally known for the mathematical papyrus that he collected, which was purchased by the British Museum after his death, Irving and Maitland have studied his contribution to the development of archaeological ‘best practice’ and his ideas about the protection of historic sites and remains. When Rhind first began excavating, it was at the time when groups of people would use picks and shovels to destroy a ‘round barrow’ in a party atmosphere rather than to cut a careful section and painstakingly remove the material in a way that the barrow might give up its secrets. Following his visits to Egypt, Rhind published a paper explaining his concern at the condition of the ancient monuments he visited.

By coincidence, Neil Cooke’s paper about Mohammed Ashgar, later known as John Bedair (1800–74), has a Rhind connection. Bedair accompanied Rhind on his travels to Egypt. He was the son of a Cairo potter, and at the age of 15 was among the servants who accompanied James Burton during his last years in Egypt encamped in the Eastern Desert. In 1834, Burton invited Mohammed to return with him to London. Taking up residence in Carnaby Street, Mohammed Ashgar changed his name to John Bedair and married an Englishwoman with whom he had several children. He later became a British Subject. Bedair set himself up in business as a ‘courier’ to accompany travellers to Egypt and be their guide and general fixer, using his language skills and experience of how to do business in the different countries that they travelled through. Bedair was highly regarded by Sir John Gardner Wilkinson and is recommended by him in his travel handbooks. It is this recommendation that is likely to have encouraged Rhind to employ him.

The paper by Maksim Lebedev introduces the subject of early Russian travellers to the Middle East and Egypt. From the first published ‘walkings’ of the 12th century written by pilgrims through to the government sponsored ‘embassies’ of more recent centuries, Russians have travelled to most parts of the region, yet meetings with

them are rarely recorded by western European travellers. It is interesting to note that like the early travellers from Western Europe, Russian travellers also relied on the same sources from antiquity for their knowledge of the different countries and would plagiarise the original texts, repeating common mistakes, such as that of the pyramids being erected as the granaries of Moses. During the 19th century, Russian travellers devoted more of their time to fact-gathering missions in order to learn more about each country from an economic and military perspective, and not so much about the history of the peoples they encountered or to study their architecture and ancient monuments. Clearly, further research will be needed to shine more light onto this largely unknown group of travellers.

A second paper from Margaret Maitland describes a revealing correspondence that developed between members of the Newcastle Literary and Philosophical Society and Jean-François Champollion. In 1820, Thomas Coates, who had been working as a doctor in India, visited Egypt, and while there he watched the excavation of a mummy at Gurna on the west bank of Thebes. Fascinated by what he saw, Coates purchased the mummy and brought it to Newcastle where he gave it to the Literary and Philosophical Society. It was the desire to understand the hieroglyphics painted on the mummy that resulted in the Society entering into a correspondence with Champollion. The letters were written at an interesting time, shortly after Champollion's famous *Letter to M. Dacier* of 1822 and the publication of his *Précis of Egyptian Grammar* in 1824. Little evidence survives from the period to show the progress Champollion was making towards the decipherment of hieroglyphics, but these few letters reveal him to be still in the process of working out the phonetic elements of the language.

Daniele Picchi's paper introduces the life and Egyptian travels of Amalia Sola Nizzoli (1805–45/49). Amalia was 14 years old when she went with her parents to live in Assiut, where her father had accepted employment as doctor to the Defterdar Bey. For the first eight months, she lived in the Defterdar's harem, learning Arabic and the customs of the Arab women. When confronted with the idea of marrying an older friend of her uncle, she refused, but shortly after, and realising this could be a way to escape the confines of the harem, she accepted an arranged marriage with Giuseppe Nizzoli, whom she had met on her arrival in Alexandria. Nizzoli's great interest was in Egyptian antiquities, and within a few years Amalia, now with a perfect knowledge of Arabic and their daughter Elisa in tow, took on the role of overseeing the excavations in the Memphite necropolis of Saqqara. It has to be noted that at the time she was competing against the likes of Henry Salt, Bernardino Drovetti and Giovanni d'Anastasi to secure excavation sites for her husband and employ a fair share of the local

workmen to dig them. Today, Amalia has to be acknowledged as a pioneer in the otherwise masculine history of Egyptian archaeology.

The paper by Daniel Polz gives the story behind the construction of the German House on the West Bank at Thebes in 1915. The German House was to complement the accommodation built for the French and British archaeologists and provide a presence in the country. While intended as a place to stay and work for German Egyptologists, a small number of artists were also given permission to live there for short periods of time and use the house as a studio. Polz has tracked down several of the paintings made at the house, a few of which were turned into postcards. These include a painting of the Temple of Amenophis III, Luxor, by Carl Wuttke, part of which was then copied to create the background to a portrait of Wuttke by the artist Hermann Barremscheen. The German House was demolished on the orders of the British Military Authorities soon after the beginning of the First World War.

The experiences of an RAF officer in the Trucial States during the Second World War, is the subject of the paper by Nicholas Stanley-Price. Over a period of eight months in 1944–45, Raymond O'Shea (1905–52) was Station Manager at the British airfield at Sharjah, approximately 20 kilometres up the coast from Dubai. Some two years later, a memoir written by O'Shea was published under the title *The Sand Kings of Oman*. Although the book was reviewed favourably on publication, a few years later Wilfrid Thesiger found much to criticise, having just completed his crossing of 'the Empty Quarter'. Others repeated and added to the criticism without checking with the original author and, by the 1980s, some doubted the facts as presented in the book – particularly those relating to O'Shea's discovery of the 'lost city' of the 'Ād tribe. With careful research among more recently unclassified government papers, it has been possible to confirm many of the events witnessed by O'Shea that others have questioned and to discover it was the publisher and not the author who gave the 'lost city' greater emphasis as a way of promoting and selling the book. It was also the publisher who included old photographs of the harbour town of Muscat in the book and claimed that they were of the 'lost city'. While there remain some inaccuracies and a few prejudices within the text of the book, O'Shea's memoir has largely been rehabilitated and is among the few descriptions of the Trucial States from this period.

The paper by Peta Rée brings to life a military adventure into Abyssinia to rescue a group of English and European hostages who were being held by Emperor Theodore at the fortress of Magdala, high in the mountains. The troops were sent from India and comprised English and Indian soldiers. Altogether some 62,000 men were

shipped to Abyssinia in 75 steamers, 205 sailing boats and 11 smaller craft, together with three hospital ships. Among the men were a geographer, an archaeologist, a meteorologist and a zoologist, plus a number of photographers. But perhaps the biggest surprise is that 44 elephants were sent to haul the heavy guns over the mountainous terrain. After the hostages were rescued, only 39 of the elephants returned to the boats for the voyage back to India.

John Thompson's paper was inspired by his purchase of an engraving after a lithograph taken from a drawing made by the artist Sir David Wilkie (1785–1841) during his stay in Constantinople in 1840. The lithograph is entitled *The Daughter of Admiral Walker* and appeared in *Sir David Wilkie's Sketches in Turkey, Syria & Egypt, 1840 & 1841*, published in London in 1843, after the artist's death. Wilkie had found himself stranded in Constantinople during a time of unrest and was advised against continuing his travels by the English Consul. With time on his hands, he made pencil drawings heightened by watercolour of some of the people with whom he came in contact. Having made a drawing of Admiral Walker, from which Wilkie also made a portrait in oils, he then made a drawing of the Admiral's daughter. Wilkie had clearly been enchanted by the small child and had her come to pose for him wearing a typical local costume that was worn by both women and children.

The Swiss Egyptologist Eduoard Naville (1844–1926) was an early employee of the Egypt Exploration Fund (EEF), known today as the Egypt Exploration Society (EES). He initially worked as an epigrapher, but then developed his skills as an archaeologist. Hélène Virenque's paper concentrates on the correspondence that survives at the EES between Naville and Amelia B. Edwards and Reginald S. Poole, the founders and first secretaries of the EES. The letters are written in a beautiful hand and, in addition to discussing various aspects of choosing the sites to excavate, they also contain insights into his working methods and also his collaboration with Flinders Petrie and the differences that arose between the two men. The transcription of the entire correspondence between Naville and many other scholars of the day is an on-going piece of work and will hopefully lead to greater understanding and recognition of his work in Egypt.

Ulrich Jasper Seetzen (1767–1811) was a contemporary of Johann Ludwig Burckhardt and they have much in common. They both visited Mecca and planned to travel across Africa from east to west, and in preparation for their travels, both men spent many years living in the Arab world in order to learn the language and understand how to behave as a Muslim so that they could live, travel and converse with the people they encountered. Sadly, both died before they were able to fulfil their dreams. While Burckhardt was able to publish some

details of his travels during his lifetime, a published version of Seetzen's dairies was only published some four decades after his death, with the editor choosing to omit his journey from Germany through the Balkans to Istanbul and then to Aleppo, and it is only in recent years that Seetzen's original diaries for this period have reappeared. Carsten Walbiner's paper concentrates on the period between November 1803 and April 1805 in which, among many other matters, Seetzen reflects on the different religious groups living side-by-side in Aleppo.

The final paper by Ronald Zitterkopf – 'Every traveller needs a compass' – has suggested the title for this collection. Although the phrase can be interpreted in many ways, Zitterkopf has chosen to provide a helpful overview of the different types of mathematical and philosophical apparatus often mentioned in the journals, diaries and letters of travellers. The instruments described are mainly those used by 18th- and 19th-century travellers to draw maps of the countries they visited and record plans of the monuments seen. Such instruments were delicate in their construction and several relied on quantities of mercury being transported across great distances, with the liquid metal being carefully poured from storage container to instrument and back again without spillage or breakage of glass.

Today, the paraphernalia of travel has changed to the extent it is possible to visit anywhere in the world with just the contents of a backpack and the technology of a smart phone to provide almost everything a person may need. However, you have to admire the people described in this volume of papers who were often expected to travel vast distances over many months with a bed and bedding, a cooking stove, pots and pans, plates, cups and cutlery, as well as carry with them bottles of mercury, glass thermometers, ladders, ropes, medicines and a small library of relevant books to consult.

Sir John Young, High Commissioner for the Ionian Islands, and His Private Letter Book, 1856–57¹

Sonia P. Anderson

Sir John Young, later Lord Lisgar (1807–76) (Fig. 1.1), a Liberal politician who ended his career as Governor-General of Canada, was first posted overseas in 1855 as High Commissioner for the Ionian Islands (Fig. 1.2). His tenure of this office has been overshadowed by its final months in 1858–59, which overlapped with Gladstone's mission to the Ionian Islands as High Commissioner Extraordinary. This episode is well documented, not only by official sources but also by the large amount of manuscript and printed material about the Islands which is available for research at the residential library that Gladstone founded in North Wales.²

For most of Young's time in the islands, however, historians have been largely dependent on public sources because his own private papers have not survived, apart from a transcript of the letter book that is the subject of this study. Even that has survived only by chance. Young had no children and the Lisgar title became extinct on his death. The baronetcy that he had inherited from his father went to a nephew serving in India, who did not inherit the property and whose descendants have no knowledge of any surviving family papers.³ After a decent interval, his widow, Lady Lisgar, married his private secretary, Sir Francis Turville, who had been with them since Corfu and was indeed responsible for many of the entries in the letter book. Turville was a Roman Catholic, 12 years her junior with a seat in Leicestershire – Bosworth Hall – where Lady Lisgar spent the rest of her life, outliving him and dying in 1895 (Fig. 1.3). Lord Lisgar's Irish estates at Bailieborough in County Cavan (approximately 9,000 acres) were then sold off to the tenants, while Bailieborough Castle passed through several hands before being damaged by fire and eventually

demolished.



Figure 1.1: Portrait of Sir John Young attr. to Richard Buckner, now in Government House, Sydney. This was painted in London and exhibited at the Sydney Inter-Colonial Exhibition 1870, so must be close in date to his time in Corfu. He is probably wearing the uniform mentioned in the article (refer to Note 23) as his GCMG, awarded in 1855 on his appointment to the Ionian Islands, seems to be an integral part of the gold braid, but the Bath, either the KCB awarded in 1859, or the GCB awarded in 1868, seems to have been



Figure 1.2: The Palace of St Michael and St George, Corfu, residence of the High Commissioners. Photograph by Sonia Anderson 2010.

On 11 May 1938, however, an auction was held at Bailieborough of the effects of Philip Dunne, who probably had kept a public house there,⁴ and a large quantity of Lord Lisgar's papers came to light, perhaps having been stored on the pub's premises since the 19th century. They were not put into the auction, but 'great bundles of loose letters' were sold off cheaply afterwards 'to local shops for the purpose of wrapping their wares'.⁵ The only item saved was the Ionian Islands letter book, which was presented to the auctioneer, John T. Finegan. His family no longer have the original letter book, which has not been sighted for more than 60 years and must be presumed lost.⁶

Fortunately, a typed transcript was made of it soon after the Second World War and sold to the London-based, Greek shipowner K. Drakoulis, from whom it passed to the poet George Seferis, who served as Greek Ambassador in London from 1957 to 1962. After his death, his widow placed a copy in the Historical Archives Section of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where it was seen and used by the Corfiote historian K. Cheimarios for an article published in the *Journal of the Reading Society of Corfu*.⁷ This, in turn, was seen by an English historian of the Ionian Islands, Anthony Seymour, who approached the Seferis estate and was given a photocopy of the

typescript from which he made several further copies.⁸ He presented one to the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland in Belfast, where it may be consulted freely,⁹ gave another to Professor Bruce Knox of Monash University, Australia, who drew on it for a major article in the *English Historical Review*,¹⁰ and very kindly gave a third copy to me.

The transcript fills 114 closely typed, foolscap pages.¹¹ Where I have checked it against surviving letters as sent,¹² it appears to be substantially accurate. However, there are many small slips in the transcription, but the context usually makes the intended meaning clear, and since the original manuscript has now disappeared and nothing else has survived of Young's personal archive, even copies of a typescript have considerable historical value, by no means exhausted by the articles I have cited.

The letter book covers only the middle 14 months of Young's three and a half years in the islands, from 26 March 1856 to 12 May 1857. About half the letters are taken up with the affairs of the Ionian Islands: correspondence in English or occasionally Italian (Young was fluent in Italian and modern Greek)¹³ with British and Ionian officials, especially the residents of Cephalonia and Zante; with his own Chief Secretary Sir George Bowen, especially during Bowen's absence on leave; with the Colonial Secretary Henry Labouchère; with British diplomatic representatives, especially Sir Thomas Wyse in Athens and Lord Stratford de Redcliffe in Constantinople; and with former and future High Commissioners Sir Howard Douglas, Sir Henry Ward and William Gladstone, the last already showing an interest in the islands. The remaining letters concern English and Irish politics; Young's family and friends; the management of his estate; and other business affairs. But these are by no means irrelevant to his Ionian mission, for they shed fresh light on his situation and character.



Figure 1.3: Memorial Plaque to Lord and Lady Lisgar, Bailieborough Church of Ireland. Photograph by and courtesy of Michael Young.

For instance, it is generally assumed that Young was born with a

silver spoon in his mouth, as the eldest son of a baronet with a castle in Ireland and a directorship of the East India Company, who sent his heir to Eton, Oxford and Lincoln's Inn. In fact, John Young was the first member of his family to attend any of these establishments, and like Gladstone, who became his 'special friend' at Eton in spite of the two-year difference in their ages, he came of devout Evangelical stock of Scottish extraction – in Young's case, a long line of clergymen that had been settled in Ulster since the 17th century. It was his father who had broken the mould. William Young was the second son of a rector and had entered the army of the Honourable East India Company and risen to the rank of lieutenant colonel. In 1806, he married the penniless, youngest daughter of another colonel, who had died in his early forties leaving eight children. The Youngs then had eight children of their own, of whom John was the eldest, born at Bombay in 1807. Only the death of his childless elder brother enabled William Young to retire on his lieutenant-colonel's pension and look around for a run-down property that he could afford. He found it in Bailieborough, which he bought in 1814, and devoted himself to repairing the crumbling castle, improving the 'very mean village' as it then was,¹⁴ making a figure in County Cavan politics and cultivating the friendship of Robert Peel, who became Chief Secretary in Ireland in 1812.¹⁵

In 1821, William was rewarded with a baronetcy, and in 1829, he was elected a director of the East India Company, which helped him to find places in the Indian service for all four of his younger sons. In 1831, he secured the election as one of the Conservative Members of Parliament for County Cavan of his 22-year-old heir, John, who held the seat undisturbed until his Ionian appointment 24 years later. John married Adelaide Tuite Dalton, stepdaughter of the Whig Lord Lieutenant of County Cavan, the Marquess of Headfort in 1835. John was made a Deputy Lieutenant, and was eventually to succeed Headfort as Lord Lieutenant. By then, he had transformed himself from a Peelite – holding office under Peel as a Commissioner of the Treasury and Joint Secretary of the Treasury, and under Lord Aberdeen as Chief Secretary in Ireland – into a full-blooded Liberal; he had no time for 'that odious charlatan Disraeli, who has dished his own party and would dish the country if every honest person does not make head to prevent him', as he told Headfort.¹⁶

Yet all this apparent success came at a high price. When he succeeded to the baronetcy in 1848, Sir John Young, as he now was, discovered that his father had died leaving vast debts, compounded by a complicated family trust (Fig. 1.4). 'Getting nothing by my Father's succession but annoyance and law,' he wrote in confidence from Corfu to his London agent. 'I have supported – I have been able to do so by

good fortune – my mother, Aunt and sisters'.¹⁷ By this time, his four younger brothers had all died, and one sister was married, but his as yet unmarried sisters, Anna and Lucy, their ailing mother, and their father's unmarried sister Susan – '87 years completed ... a rare specimen of strength of constitution and mental activity', still writing 'long lively letters with a firm hand'¹⁸ – were all living in cheap lodgings in Bordeaux on the little he could spare from his salary. He entreated his sisters not to let anyone know of their straitened circumstances.¹⁹ The death in August 1856 of 'my poor dear gentle Mother',²⁰ 'as kind, gentle and devoted a parent as ever existed',²¹ was a bitter blow, as he confided in letters which Professor Theodore Hoppen, who was lent a copy of the letter book, describes rather unkindly as 'maudlin reminiscences'.²²

Young's sisters then moved to lodgings in London (where incidentally Young's tailor had been kept waiting for over a year for payment for his Ionian outfit).²³ But in the course of the letter book his finances can gradually be seen to improve. 'All my accounts from Ireland are excellent,' he wrote in March 1857, 'country quiet, prices good, farmers prospering, rents well paid, etc'.²⁴ He was able to sell off part of the heavily mortgaged family sugar plantations in Surinam, reduce his debt to the Western Bank by £7,000, and also pay off part of his father's debt to his mother's brother, Lieutenant General Edward Frederick, who was owed £19,000.²⁵

And in parallel he was applying the same careful management to the heavily indebted government of the Ionian Islands. His fiscal prudence contrasts strongly with that of other High Commissioners. His success was due partly to deliberate economies, such as the reduction of places in each of the island treasuries, and partly to the bumper currant crop of 1856. There was considerable distress in the islands from high bread prices, caused by not enough grain being grown. But as Young told Gladstone with pride, 1855's large olive crop and 1856's large currant crop 'have greatly recruited private resources, and so filled the public coffers that I have been enabled to meet all expenses and pay off £48,000 of debt' – for emphasis spelling out 48,000 in words as well as figures.²⁶



Figure 1.4: Portrait of Sir John Young by an unknown artist, now in private possession. This probably dates from ten years before Young went to Corfu. Photograph by and courtesy of Michael Young.

Young also spent wisely and compassionately the £5,000 that he was allowed to disburse annually at his own discretion. He helped to relieve the distress caused by the cholera epidemic of 1855, which claimed 480 lives; he had 500 dogs put down on Corfu to prevent the spread of hydrophobia; he built water tanks on Paxos, and contributed to famine relief there; he encouraged the building of branch roads between villages; the improvement of schools (a subject close to his heart in Ireland);²⁷ and he advocated pensions for retired senators with no other means of support.²⁸

He shared strongly the unorthodox view of an earlier High

Commissioner, Sir Howard Douglas, that the large sums of money spent on improving the fortifications of Corfu were completely wasted and would be much better employed on extending the town:²⁹ 'The present system coops a population of 17,000 people up in a small space without ventilation, sewerage or any proper accommodation in the most loathsome and insalubrious manner. Houses for want of room are built six or seven or eight stories in a country subject to earthquakes. If the earthquakes of two or three months ago had continued thirty second[s] longer I should probably have had hundreds of deaths to report'³⁰ (October 1856 had seen the first major earthquake in Corfu for 25 years³¹). He stressed that 'the real defence of Corfu is the British Fleet', and his closely argued reasoning against the utility of the fortifications if command of the seas were lost was later to convert Gladstone to his point of view.

He instituted an annual horticultural show: 'The vegetables etc. were moderately good, but the flowers were magnificent, in vast quantities and kin[d]s which only grow under glass in England but here in profusion and luxuriance in the open air'.³² While Lady Young took to sketching 'with great ardour' under the influence of Edward Lear, 'a most agreeable person and great addition to our Society',³³ Sir John often joined the officers of the garrison on sporting excursions to the island of Fano (now Othoni) off the north-west coast of Corfu, reporting for example on 13 May 1856 that 'we had capital shooting at Fano for three days, one day we (four of us) shot 190 quails and every day bagsfull of doves, quails, waterbirds with long necks and bee-eaters and yellow birds with gorgeous plumage'.³⁴ They also crossed regularly to the Ottoman mainland at Saranda in quest of woodcock or other game. 'This was a very good shooting season', Young reported in March 1857, 'heaps of woodcock, really thousands were got in November and December and since then 25 or 30 wild pigs and twice as many roe deer'.³⁵ And he made more extensive jaunts with his wife. 'Lady Young is dying to go to Athens and leaves me no peace on the subject,' he told Wyse in August 1856.³⁶ It proved impracticable that year, but they did enjoy greatly 'a trip up to Corinth seeing Delphi, Megaspelaon, Lepanto, Patras etc. ... except that we were tormented and nearly devoured by bugs'.³⁷

The previous year, as Young had told Gladstone in a 13-page private letter now in the British Library, they had made 'a most delightful tour round the Islands, as is the usual practice, the weather was lovely and we saw everything to the greatest advantage, protracting our journey as far as Crete. I never saw anything so beautiful, so fertile, and so sadly in decay as that island.' He found the same decay in Epirus: 'Never were lands so favoured by nature more thoroughly blighted by apathy and misgovernment. I used to think the peasantry of Ireland

wild and lawless and miserable, and the agriculture there wretched; but what are they to the squalid ferocity of an Albania'.³⁸

In April 1857, the Youngs made an 11-day tour over very bad roads from Saranda via Delvina and Zitsa to Ioannina, where Sir John was received by the Pasha with such ceremony that he hastily sent an apology to the British ambassador at the Porte for trespassing on his territory – 'I should not have come to Ioannina had I thought so ceremonious a reception awaited me'³⁹ – but he seized the opportunity to discuss with the Pasha ways of dealing with brigandage and improving the roads, a subject on which he had previously sought action in vain. There are vivid descriptions both here, and in a letter to Lord Cowley in Paris,⁴⁰ of the damage done by Ali Pasha's regime to Venetian roads, drainage and irrigation. But Young also had a low opinion of Greece under King Otho; so one of the various scenarios he put forward for the future of the Ionian Islands was that Turkey might be induced to give up strategic points on the coastline between Saranda and Preveza to be united with Corfu, Paxos and the islets under British rule, while the five southern islands formed an independent republic of their own. His proposal, sent to Labouchère on 20 April 1856, is in the letter book but was taken seriously enough to be printed for the Cabinet and is now available in the Confidential Print series in the National Archives.⁴¹

Better known, of course, is his despatch of 8 June 1857, a few weeks after the letter book ends, proposing the annexation of Corfu and Paxos to Britain and of the other islands to Greece. The despatch was stolen a year later and published in the *Daily News*, resulting ultimately in Young's recall. Because this proposal coincided with the preferred solution of the island government's Chief Secretary Sir George Bowen, Young has sometimes been regarded as a tool in Bowen's hands, but Bowen's biographer, Professor Knox, regards the evidence as 'decidedly equivocal' on that score.⁴² The Young-Bowen relationship which emerges from the letter book is much more complicated than that.

Bowen's marriage in 1856 to the daughter of the President of the Ionian Senate, Count Roma, was followed by an extended honeymoon in England, during which Young and Bowen conducted a private correspondence. Young used Bowen as his agent with the home government; for example, pleading for the use of a small steamer: 'We were 24 hours coming from Paxo last Saturday, a distance a steamer could do in 4'.⁴³

Before Bowen left the islands, Young had obtained a knighthood for him, but he was now briefing privately against him in his confidential letters to Labouchère: 'thoroughly a good fellow but easily blinded and easily led', 'a mere puppet in his wife's friends' hands',⁴⁴ and

urging his transfer: 'He would be better anywhere else than here'.⁴⁵ Young was completely unaware of this, and therefore shocked to be offered the Secretaryship of Mauritius; as he pointed out, other British officials in the Ionian Islands, including a High Commissioner, had married Ionians without being invited to transfer.⁴⁶ When Bowen did eventually move on, it was to become the first Governor of Queensland – a few months before Sir John Young became Governor of adjacent New South Wales.

In Corfu, Young in fact relied at least equally on the island government's other Secretary, the Ionian Count Dusmani.⁴⁷ It was to be Gladstone, not Young, who ignored Dusmani's views and became too heavily dependent on Bowen, in the opinion of Robert Holland and Diana Markides.⁴⁸ And it was Young who saw that 'The basic truth was always that the Protection could either be kept going as a semi-veiled military autocracy, or it could be got rid of *tout court*. Any attempt to find a middle way was bound to be trapped in contradictions' Sir John Young would not, of course, have framed matters precisely in these terms, but many of them were embedded in his own critique. As so often in the buried history of public policy, it was an interpretation defeated and condemned in its own time which was, on balance, closer to the truth'.⁴⁹ Mordant comments on the constitution characterise Young's private correspondence throughout his years in the Islands.

'I have not let my disapproval and utter want of confidence in the existing constitution paralyze me entirely,' Young wrote dryly to Gladstone on 10 November 1856. He had issued strict instructions that the forthcoming elections to the Legislative Assembly should be conducted without any interference from any department under his control, 'or I will know the reason why not'.⁵⁰ As he told the Resident of Cephalonia, 'It is very little matter who wins or who loses, for those who get places will be quiet and manageable and all those who don't the reverse'.⁵¹ The result he found entirely satisfactory, for when the new Assembly met in 1857, it not only refrained from attacking him, but also asked him to prorogue it for two months to allow the law officers in London to decide the disputed elections.⁵² As late as June 1858, he was able to tell Gladstone, in some surprise, 'Half of my time here is over without disaster'.⁵³ Had he retired then, he would have been remembered as an outstanding High Commissioner.

But of course, it was the lull before the storm and he was to be recalled only seven months later. He did complete his six-year term as Governor of New South Wales (1861–67), where after a rocky start he did well,⁵⁴ and in 1868 was promoted Governor-General of Canada. This, too, was a success, recognised in his elevation to the peerage in 1870 as Lord Lisgar, and it was only ill-health that forced him to

resign in 1872 and return to Bailieborough, where he died in 1876 (Figs 1.5 and 1.6). Lady Lisgar sent Gladstone an account of his last days: 'For some weeks before his death his whole thoughts were fixed on the world to where he was going – his humility was so excessive that at times he thought himself too unworthy, too great a sinner ... His faith was wonderful, so was his patience and humility – and he died praying'.⁵⁵



Figure 1.5: Lord Lisgar's tomb in Bailieborough Church of Ireland graveyard. Photograph by and courtesy of Michael Young 2014.



Figure 1.6: Inscription on Lord Lisgar's tomb in Bailieborough Church of Ireland graveyard. Photograph by and courtesy of Michael Young 2014.

If even his wife thought his humility excessive, it is easy to see why his selfdoubt was often taken for weakness. As he said himself, 'I do not usually value my own opinion too highly, indeed my friends tell me my fault lies in the opposite direction and that I distrust it too much'.⁵⁶ The future Premier of New South Wales, Henry Parkes, appreciated his qualities: 'Fully informed on political subjects, he was frank and modest in communicating to others the lessons of his experience – in intercourse with him one received instruction unawares'.⁵⁷ But others took him at his own valuation. Professor Hoppen characterises his two-year tenure as Chief Secretary in Ireland, immediately before his Ionian appointment, as one of chronic indecisiveness,⁵⁸ and indeed he hesitated for six weeks about whether or not to resign it in favour of the Ionian post.⁵⁹ In the end, he was stung into acceptance by learning from the Duke of Newcastle that it was being offered instead to a career diplomat on the grounds that Young 'was too much of a gentleman', 'had not devil enough' and 'was not use[d] to low intrigues', so that the cunning Ionians would be sure to run rings round him. 'The qualifications ... which his Grace appears to require in the person selected to represent England in these fortunate Islands', Young told Gladstone with some disdain, might have been drawn up in the novel *Gil Blas* for 'the valet of some young debauché'.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, he had Gladstone intercede with the Duke on his behalf. Once in the islands, he tried to remain above the fray: 'No Englishman is a match for the Ionians in management and intrigue, and if he descends into the arena with them he is certain to get the worst'.⁶¹ Popular opinion in England was indeed to see Sir John Young as a dupe of the Ionians, but the letter book reveals a humane and clear-sighted individual well aware of the falsity of both the British government's position and his own. It was Gladstone, sent out to enquire into the administration of the islands and to recommend constitutional changes short of union with Britain or Greece, who was initially at least the more deceived. *Punch* summed it up:

'The Isles of Greece, the Isles of Greece, Where glib Ionians gammoned Young;
Where crops of currants never cease; Where Maitland ruled, and Byron sung –
We have them, and must keep them yet, Though nothing by the job we get. ...
And so Young went, and Gladstone came, Homeric rapture in his face; With
Philhellene tacked to his name, To calm the heady island race. ... The senate
gathers at his call, And flings his offers at his head: Reforms they don't require
at all, But union with Greece instead'.⁶²

Notes

- 1 This is a revised version of a paper given on 27 May 2010 and published as Sonia P. Anderson, 'Sir John Young, High Commissioner for the Ionian Islands (1855–59), and His Private Letter book', *Proceedings of the 9th Panionian*

Conference, Paxos, 26–30 May 2010, A, Paxos 2014, pp. 401–10. The letter book was also briefly described in Sonia P. Anderson, ‘Private Papers of British High Commissioners for the Ionian Islands (1815–63)’, *Proceedings of the 6th Panionian Conference, Zakynthos, 23–27 September 1997*, I, Thessaloniki 2000, pp. 417–18.

- 2 See Sonia P. Anderson, ‘Material Relating to the Ionian Islands among Gladstone’s Papers at St Deinios’s Library, Hawarden’, *Proceedings of the 8th Panionian Conference, Kythera, 21–25 May 2006*, III, Kythera 2009, pp. 11–22, which formed the basis for a talk to ASTENE members in Corfu on 9 May 2010.
- 3 This is confirmed by the nephew’s grandson Michael Young, author of *A Family Kaleidoscope. The Young Family & Inter-related Families 1500–2010*, Brisbane 2010.
- 4 According to the Ulster Town Directory of 1910 and the census of 1911.
- 5 Letter from Anthony Seymour to Sonia Anderson, 26 April 2010, citing correspondence shown to him in the 1980s by Professor K. T. Hoppen (since destroyed).
- 6 His son’s widow Philomena Finegan kindly informs me that the family no longer has the original manuscript or any record of it.
- 7 K. Cheimarios, ‘Xanakoitazondas ton Sir John Young vasel orismenon neoterion stoicheion’. *Deltio Anagnostikis Etairias Kérkyras*, 15 (1978), pp. 117–32. He describes its provenance on p. 117. The copy he saw cannot be located.
- 8 I have been unable to trace the typescript owned by George Seferis, in spite of helpful suggestions by his stepdaughter Anna Lontou, his niece Despina Mylona, and the staff of the Gennadius Library, Athens. It may be with other Seferis material in the Vikelaia Library, Heraklion.
- 9 PRONI Reference T3511/1.
- 10 Bruce Knox, ‘British policy and the Ionian Islands, 1847–64: nationalism and imperial administration’, *English Historical Review* 99 (1984), pp. 504–29.
- 11 Numbered 1–57, 59–115 (58 having been omitted in error when the pages were numbered). Other copies, which I have not seen, are described as having 113 pages (in *Deitio*), or 114 pages (PRONI), and citations from them reflect their through-numbering. The citations below are from my own copy of the typescript.
- 12 E.g. Young’s letter of 30 November 1856 to Henry Labouchère in the Letter Book (pp. 68–69), and in British Library, AddMss 62940 (ff. 37–38).
- 13 Letter Book, p. 3: ‘I am now transacting business exclusively in Greek and Italian’ (Young to [William] Keogh, 29 March 1856).
- 14 Sir Charles Coote’s description of his *Statistical Survey of the County of Cavan*, Dublin 1802, p. 163. ‘I know of no town more neglected,’ he added, ‘or which has better capabilities.’
- 15 Some of the correspondence is among Peel’s papers in the British Library, AddMss 40276 and 40408.
- 16 Letter Book, p. 102: Young to Headfort, 6 April 1857.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 30: Young to James Mackillop, 24 June 1856.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 109: Young to W. H. C. Plowden, 28 April 1857.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 63, 83. ‘Verily money is a great bother,’ he told his agent in confidence, ‘particularly so in my case when one has not got it, and is supposed to have it.’ (Letter Book, p. 103: Young to Mackillop, 7 April 1857).
- 20 Letter Book, p. 53: Young to William Donnelly, 13 October 1856.
- 21 *Ibid.*, p. 50: Young to the Earl of St Germans, 6 October 1856.
- 22 K. T. Hoppen (1984) *Elections, Politics and Society in Ireland, 1832–85*, Oxford, p. 142. He was perhaps misled by a passage he cites in which Young appears to write of his mother: ‘Never was there a truer homester or more loyal friend or

- Parent than she was.’ (Letter Book, p. 59: Young to Chambers, 31 October 1856). But ‘homester’ is surely the typist’s misreading of ‘honester’.
- 23 Letter Book, p. 40.
- 24 *Ibid.*, p. 98: Young to J[ohn] E[lfred] Vernon [mistranscribed as S. E. Vernon], 17 March 1857.
- 25 *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 87, 95–96.
- 26 *Ibid.*, p. 62: Young to Gladstone, 10 November 1856. This seems to be the only letter to Gladstone in the Letter Book whose original survives among the Gladstone-Young correspondence in the British Library, AddMss 44237, ff. 270–73.
- 27 On succeeding to the baronetcy he had established in Bailieborough not only a Model School, with separate buildings for boys, girls, and later infants (whose records are now held by Cavan County Library), but also an agricultural college (with farm attached), the Model House. Leslie McKeague, *Bailieborough: A Pictorial Past*, Bailieborough 2010, pp. 11, 13, 30, 54–55.
- 28 Letter Book, pp. 56–57; British Library, AddMss 44237, f. 267.
- 29 Letter Book, p. 105.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p. 80: Young to [John] Ball, 12 January 1857.
- 31 *Ibid.*, p. 54.
- 32 *Ibid.*, p. 24: Young to Thomas Hewat, 3 June 1856.
- 33 *Ibid.*, pp. 34–35: Young to C[hichester] Fortescue [mistranscribed as G. Fortescue], 7 July 1856.
- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 16: Young to W. Talbot Clifton, 13 May 1856.
- 35 *Ibid.*, p. 96: Young to the Hon. C[hables] H[ugh] Lindsay [mistranscribed as Lindsey], 17 March 1857.
- 36 *Ibid.*, p. 45: Young to Wyse, 25 August 1856.
- 37 *Ibid.*, p. 67: Young to Sir Henry Ward, n.d. [entered between 22 and 24 November 1856].
- 38 British Library, AddMss 44237, f. 268: Young to Gladstone, 1 March 1856.
- 39 Letter Book, p. 107: Wyse to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, 23 April 1857.
- 40 *Ibid.*, pp. 54–55.
- 41 *Ibid.*, pp. 10–11; The National Archives, CO 883/1/5.
- 42 Bruce Knox, ‘British policy and the Ionian Islands, 1847–64: nationalism and imperial administration’, *English Historical Review* 99 (1984), pp. 511–18, 523.
- 43 Letter Book, p. 32: Young to Bowen, 3 July 1856.
- 44 *Ibid.*, p. 39: Young to Labouchère, 29 July 1856.
- 45 *Ibid.*, p. 68: Young to Labouchère, 30 November 1856 (original in British Library, AddMss 62940, f. 37).
- 46 *Ibid.*, pp. 71, 74; British Library, AddMss 62940, ff. 43–44.
- 47 *Ibid.*, p. 85.
- 48 Robert Holland and Diana Markides, *The British and the Hellenes. Struggles for Mastery in the Eastern Mediterranean 1850–1960*, Oxford, 2006, p. 25.
- 49 *Ibid.*, p. 44.
- 50 Letter Book, p. 62.
- 51 *Ibid.*, p. 71: Young to Lieutenant Colonel [later Sir] Patrick Talbot, 10 December 1856.
- 52 *Ibid.*, pp. 92, 93, 105, 106.
- 53 British Library, AddMss 44237, f. 277: Young to Gladstone, 7 June 1858. Typically, he continued: ‘It is impossible not to like and take an interest in the people here, but the institutions [and] the form of Government are the most absurd and ill-calculated possible, and never will work to the credit of the English or the advantage of the Ionians’. (*Ibid.*, ff. 277–78).
- 54 His administration is described by Gareth Griffith in David Clune and Ken

Turner (eds), *The Governors of New South Wales 1788–2010*, Sydney 2009, pp. 251–74.

55 British Library, AddMss 44452, ff. 224–25.

56 Letter Book, p. 44.

57 Quoted in John M. Ward's article on Young in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, VI, Melbourne, 1976, pp. 455–57.

58 K. T. Hoppen (1984) *Elections, Politics and Society in Ireland, 1832–85*, Oxford, p. 261.

59 Letter Book, p. 99.

60 British Library, AddMss 44237, ff. 247–48: Young to Gladstone, 31 January 1855.

61 Letter Book, p. 68, and original in British Library, AddMss 62940, ff. 37–38: Young to Labouchère, 30 November 1856.

62 *Punch*, 5 March 1859, p. 99.

Edward Lear in Gozo, March 1866

Joseph Attard Tabone

Edward Lear is one of the most prolific artists and popular writers of the Victorian period. He visited, and recorded with sketches and watercolours, the landscape and coastline of Gozo between 16 and 23 March 1866. The compiler of the *International Dictionary of Artists who Painted. Malta* describes him 'as one of the few artistic giants to visit the shores of Malta'. Between 1848 and 1866, he visited Malta six times. His longest and most productive stay was that between December 1865 and early April 1866.

In 1865, after visiting Venice to work on an oil painting commissioned by Lady Waldegrave, Lear decided to spend the winter in Malta. On his arrival from Marseilles on 9 December, he was disappointed to find that his friends, the Governor, Sir Henry Storks, and his secretary Evelyn Baring, whom he knew from his time in Corfu, had just been transferred temporarily to Jamaica. Consequently, he had no friends on the island and he did not care for the naval and military social life. In mid March, having worked endlessly on the Venetian canvas and 'drawn all Malta', he decided to pay a visit to Gozo. This smaller island is 14 km (8¾ miles) long and 7 km (4½ miles) wide with a very distinctive topography, with its many flat-topped hills and verdant countryside.

On Friday 16 March – a lovely morning – Lear and his manservant, Giorgio Kokali, took a hackney carriage from Valletta to Marfa, the departure point for Gozo. It was pulled by two horses and had space for four passengers, who on this occasion included Mr and Mrs Hayward, whom Lear had met before on the boat from Marseilles. They had to walk some of the way 'for the two horses could not pull up the hills'. Arriving at Marfa, Lear wrote in his diary that 'the sea was calm and wonderful in colour but with a swell' but with not enough wind for the ferry to use the sail. By noon they were at Mgarr, the small harbour in Gozo. While Mrs Hayward took a carriage, her

husband, Lear and Giorgio walked to Rabat, the small principal town of Gozo, later named Victoria in 1897 on the occasion of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The first impression that Edward Lear had of the island was that 'Gozo is evidently full of picturesque views, the hills being so well drawn and separate. Rabato ... is like Athens – really immensely beautiful in its way'.

On arrival in Rabat, Lear took two rooms in an hotel: one for Giorgio and another in which he put what he referred to as 'the old Petra bed'. After a good lunch, accompanied by a bottle of Marsala, the two travellers climbed up the nearby Gelmus Hill from where they had a 'remarkable and grand view'. From this vantage point, Lear made drawings of Rabat for two hours before returning to the hotel where they were given a supper of fish, chicken and pudding. At 9.30 pm they went to bed.

During his stay in Gozo, Lear woke at about 5.30 am every day, had a good breakfast, and was provided with a packed lunch. He would then leave the hotel at about 6.30 am, returning in the evening in time to eat with the other guests. When he was painting, he might work from early morning until the evening light had gone. He sometimes pushed himself until he was exhausted, walking about 15 miles in a day (Fig. 2.1).

The next day, Lear and Giorgio left in search of Fungus Rock (Fig. 2.2), a curiosity for visitors because of a plant that was believed to have medicinal properties. When the rock, which is just offshore, came into view, Lear started to draw it but did very little because of the strong wind, so they set off for Gharb. In the village, many women were going to church and Lear noticed 'they are here very handsome, or rather sweet looking'. As the scirocco weather turned cloudy they returned to the 'locanda' [hotel].

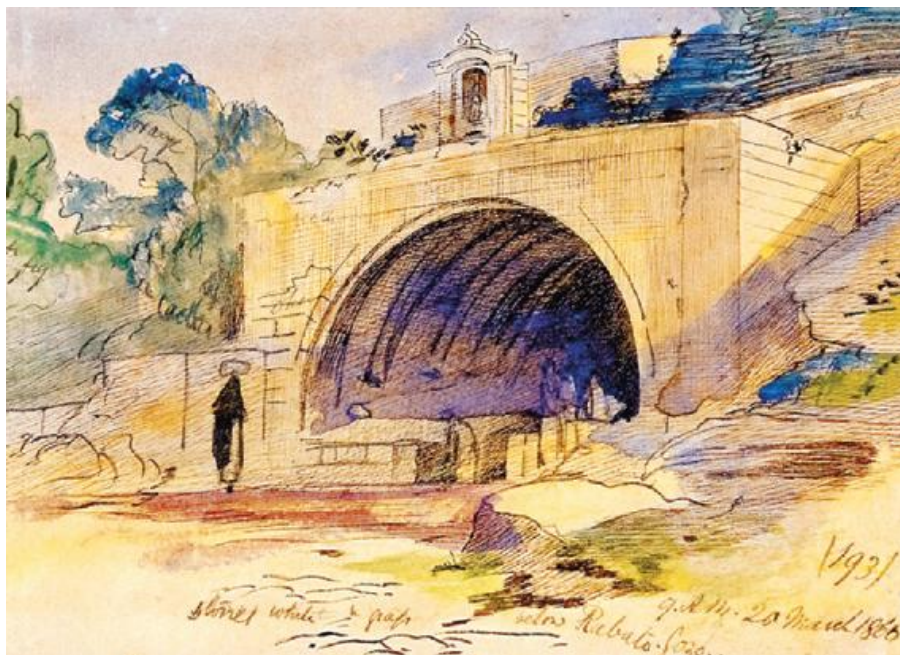


Figure 2.1: Below Rabato, Gozo, 20 March 1866, 9.00 am, (n. 193). Courtesy of the National Museum of Fine Arts, Valletta, Malta.

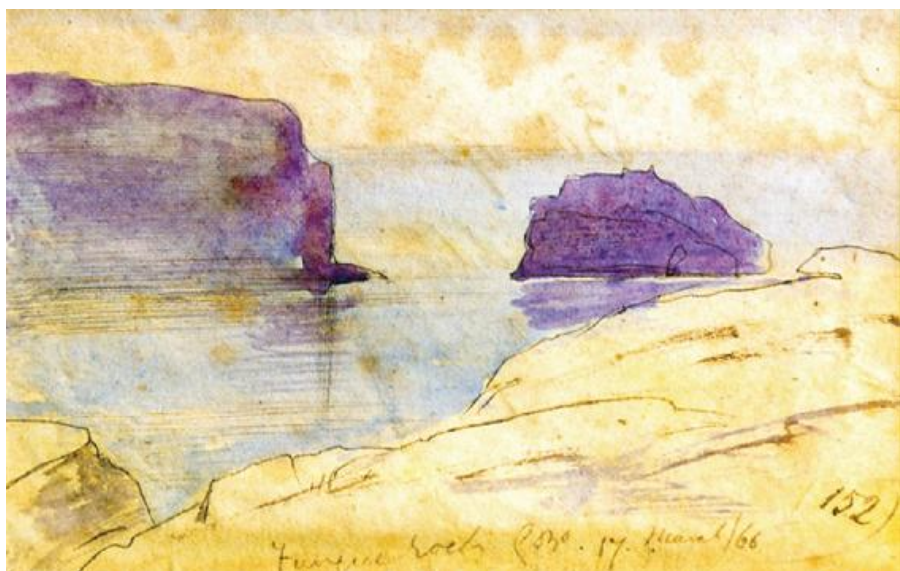


Figure 2.2: Fungus Rock, Gozo, 17 March 1866, (n. 152). Courtesy of the National Museum of Fine Arts, Valletta, Malta.

Sunday, 18 March, was a bright and beautiful day. In the streets of Rabat, people were selling their wares, dressed in their Sunday best, as they still do. On the way to Xaghra, Lear could see Etna and the long Sicilian coast, which reminded him of his visits to Sicily in the

spring of 1841 and 1847. This prompted him to make some drawings of the scene. He continued climbing up the very steep road to Xaghra, which is still in use today as a shortcut known as 'the ladder' between the village and Victoria. At the top he wrote, 'All the views downwards are really lovely.'

Lear's preoccupation on this day was to make some drawings of the prehistoric temple of Ggantija. He noted: 'The scattered village or villages on the plateau seemed very clear and pleasant and the women coming from the church are all more or less pretty and nice looking'. His diary continues, 'At last I found the object, a vast rude temple in fields of cultivation, but with walls, all ruins about. Vast stones 10–13 ft high. The interior like those of Krendi.' In the diary, he drew a tiny trefoil plan of the temple. Hurriedly, he sketched five views before 11.30 am.

Lear called the air divine – the wind was probably coming from a northerly direction, which on a mid-March day usually guarantees clear visibility. It was the perfect day for drawing. Lear went down the hill to an area of rich gardens with fountains. This was the spot where village folk washed their linen because there was a continuous supply of water from an abundant stream. Lear took the opportunity to fill his water flask and then made his way up the opposite hill, by which he meant Nuffara Hill. After lunch, he made two drawings and walked down the hill back to the fountains, where he admired the beautiful rocks and vegetation. He went back up to Xaghra village and then, on his way to Rabat, stopped to make two drawings of 'the dim purple landscape towards Marsalforn' where the fields at that time of the year would have been covered with clover. The last comment in his diary, after supper with the Haywards, was that the day was a pleasant one.

Monday, 19 March, was the day of the feast of St Joseph and there was a perpetual ringing of bells which Lear always found irritating. At 6.20 am he walked with Giorgio down towards the Capuchin Friary and then to Marsalforn Bay where he noticed about 20 boats and many summer houses. He drew till 10.30 am when he left the seaside resort and walked up a tortuous hill to Zebbug, 'a most windy and weathered village'. He admired the beauty of the village women and he thought that the goats were like 'silver silk'. He did some drawings, but the wind was too strong and at one o'clock they started to return to Rabat. Along the road, they stopped for lunch and a quiet moment below a wall, before continuing their journey. To avoid going through Rabat, they 'skirted an ugly blinding ravine' which brought them to the Munxar road where Lear remained drawing until late.

Early the next morning, Lear and Giorgio set off for Xlendi (Fig. 2.3), probably taking the Munxar road. Finding himself above the

Xlendi valley he drew for nearly two hours. Later, he wrote that the view down the valley was extremely 'beautiful and characteristic of Gozo'. He was completely mesmerised by it. Stopping to draw the Gran Fontana in the village of Fontana, he commented later how glad he was at having to suffer 'very little annoyance from the people'. On his way down to Xlendi, Lear made a lengthy drawing from the edge of the 'very picturesque' ravine. The port reminded him of Paleokastritsa in Corfu. By 11.30 am, he had already finished a drawing of the 'cavernous' side of the bay.

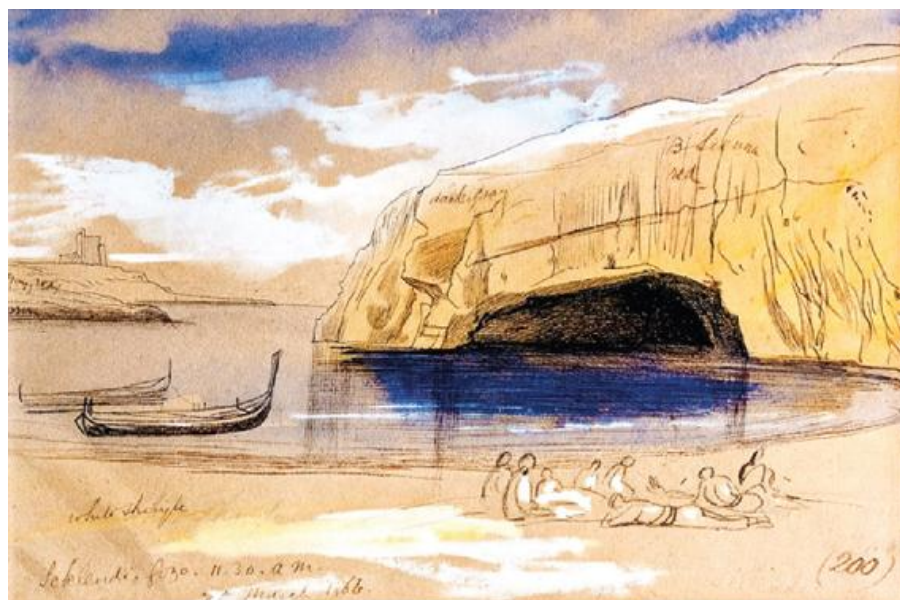


Figure 2.3: Scklendi, Gozo, 20 March 1866, 11.30 am, (n. 200). Courtesy of the National Museum of Fine Arts, Valletta, Malta.

The fishermen on the shore offered Lear and Giorgio some fish, but they decided to keep on their way to the tower at the end of the bay. He found the pointed rocks were unpleasant to walk on and was ready to give up, but saw Giorgio 'clambering up loaded with 2 cloaks, lunch, sketch book, as if he was in a broad street'. They then had to climb a dangerous wall. Finally, when they came to a quiet spot at the top, it was only the buzzing of the bees that disturbed him.

After they had eaten their lunch, Lear went down to the tower, but he did not draw for long because he was feeling tired. Lear and Giorgio then walked up the hill, but were unable to find a proper path, just endless walls. After following various trails, they 'came out on the windy sea platforms whence all Malta was visible and the cliffs most stupendous, but the wind was too terrible and I could do little'. So he decided to go to the Sannat Road (Fig. 2.4) from where he drew

Rabat, and later from Rabat he drew Munxar. Arriving at the hotel very tired at 7.30 pm, Lear had some words of gratitude for Giorgio, as a travelling servant whose great patience was very valuable. It is hardly surprising that Lear was tired. It had been a physically demanding day, during which he had produced 15 drawings.

Wednesday, 21 March, was bright and breezy. Setting out as usual with Giorgio, Lear made a drawing of the nearby hills, with rows of cactus in the foreground. After making a large outline of Rabat, he stopped to draw 'the haunted house', surrounded by noisy children. The red-painted 'haunted house' at Tac-Cawla was still *in situ* 25 years ago. He then followed the road to Xewkija, passed by the windmill and then on to the Torre and towards Mgarr ix-Xini, a picturesque gorge running down to an inlet. After drawing Mgarr ix-Xini, Lear and Giorgio descended into the valley in which a variety of vegetables were growing, as well as gladioli, iris, acanthus, asparagus, strawberries and wild flowers. On a long straight road, probably the one leading to Ta' Cenc, they met some farmers who filled their flask with water. From a vantage point, which would have given him a panoramic view of the hills and hilltop villages of Gozo, Lear took the opportunity to make a drawing. For lunch, they had cold pigeon, eggs, cheese and oranges. Lear noted how 'extremely happy, how quiet and pleasant' it was.

After lunch, they passed a large building on their way to Ta' Cenc 'to copy the cliffs'. This was Palazzo Palina, which can still be seen in a very good state of preservation. To Lear, the cliffs at Ta' Cenc were 'stupendous' and, because there was no wind, he was able to draw them twice. A monochrome sketch, a copy of one of these two drawings, and one of nearly 200 which Lear produced in the last years before he died to accompany Alfred Tennyson's poems, was included as an illustration for the poem 'The Palace of Art' to go with the stanza, 'One show'd an iron coast and angry waves ...'. At about 4.00 pm, Lear left for Rabat where he called on Mr Attard to make arrangements for his return to Malta at the end of the week.



Figure 2.4: Near Sannat 'Rabato', Gozo, 21 March 1866, 4.00 pm, (216). Private collection.

On Thursday 22 March, Lear left the hotel on his own, earlier than usual, at 5.15 am. The day started to become so windy, cold and cloudy that he had to put on his cloak. He made some drawings on his way to Mgarr, passing Fort Chambray and finishing at the port, where he also made some sketches, realising that this was the place for drawing Gozo boats. After wandering about for a while, he worked until one o'clock, drawing the slopes of Fort Chambray before going to Ghajnsielem, a nearby village, 'full of water and blessed with no end of vegetation', where he drew until 4.45 pm. After wandering about looking for 'fresh scenes', he went back to his hotel. For supper, he had the company of two English couples with whom he stayed talking until midnight.

In the morning of Friday, 23 March, Lear left after paying the bill which amounted to £2 8s 3d, which he considered 'not too much for 7 days lodging and food'. He bought a lace parasol top for Jane Hunt. Then he sent his luggage by cart to Nadur, where he and Giorgio later had lunch and ordered a boat to take them to Malta at 6.00 am the next day (Fig. 2.5). Afterwards, he went down towards Ramla Bay and 'other points none of which were however fit to look at after the great Cenc rocks'. The last drawing he did in Gozo shows a view of the valley towards Ramla Bay. Then it suddenly struck him that he should cross over to Malta that evening as the sea might not be so calm the next day and he was not a very good sailor.



Figure 2.5: Near Nadur, 23 March 1866, 2.30 pm, (233). Private collection.

In no time, a packed supper was prepared and the luggage was sent to the boat. Lear and Giorgio followed and in half an hour they were on the boat with four rowers heading for Marfa. Fifty minutes later, they were on *terra ferma*, where the artillery soldiers were keeping watch. By this time, it was 8.00 pm and Lear and Giorgio passed the night in an empty house.

At the end of the Gozo trip, Lear remarked that it ‘has been a pleasure and successful, morally and culturally, if not materially’. Later, in a letter to his friend, Frances, Lady Waldegrave, he described Gozo’s scenery as ‘pomskizillious and gromphiberous, being as no words can describe its magnificence’. In his eight-day stay on the island, Edward Lear was able to produce more than 80 drawings and sketches which are now spread all over the world, with private owners and in museums and libraries. In Malta, there are four watercolours by Lear of Gozo in the Museum of Fine Arts. If it had not been for the wind, he would surely have produced more.

On the 150th anniversary of Lear’s birth, the Malta Postal Services took the opportunity to issue two postage stamps depicting two of his watercolours: one of Malta and the other of Gozo.

I am proud to say that Xaghra, my village in Gozo, has an effigy of Edward Lear in the Museum of Toys surrounded by a few of his books and by reproductions of some of his drawings of Gozo.

The Travels of G. A. Wallin and His Views on Western Influence in the Middle East

Patricia Berg

The Finnish Orientalist Georg August Wallin (1811–52) (Fig. 3.1) travelled on the Arabian Peninsula and Sinai, in Egypt, Syro-Palestine and Persia in the years 1843–49. The scientific aim of his research journey was to collect material about Arab tribal relations and Arabic dialects. Wallin travelled as a Muslim under assumed names, mostly as ‘Abd al-Wālī, and his itinerary included visits to the cities of Mecca and Medina. The most remarkable thing about Wallin as a travelling researcher is not only that he travelled as a philologist at a time when research expeditions were usually of a scientific or military nature, but also that his personality and linguistic talents enabled him to become part of the people and the language he studied.

GEORG AUGUST WALLIN

Wallin came from a relatively modest background. He was born into a Swedish speaking family on the Åland Island in Finland in 1811. Finland was a part of Sweden until 1808, thus a large part of the educated class was at this time Swedish-speaking Finns. From 1808, until the country gained its independence in 1917, Finland was a part of the Russian Empire. Wallin was born, therefore, in a Finland that at the time was an autonomous part of Russia. The young Wallin enrolled as a student at the Imperial Alexander University, which today is the University of Helsinki. There, he took lectures in the classical and oriental languages of Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Greek and Latin – but he also knew German, French, English and Russian. After he completed his candidate’s degree, he wrote his docent’s thesis on the principal difference between modern and classical Arabic, i.e. a study of Arabic dialects.

After completing his thesis, Wallin went to St Petersburg to conduct further studies in oriental languages. In St Petersburg, he met the Egyptian Muḥammad 'Ayyād al-Ṭanṭāwī who became Wallin's teacher in Arabic. al-Ṭanṭāwī had studied at al-Azhar University in Cairo before coming to Russia and encouraged Wallin to travel to the Middle East in order to familiarize himself on the spot with the various forms of Arabic. In the autumn of 1841 the University in Helsinki announced a travelling grant for young scholars. Wallin applied and was awarded a scholarship.



Figure 3.1: Portrait of Georg August Wallin. Helsinki University Museum. © Matto Ruotsalainen.

According to the itinerary attached to his application, Wallin intended to begin his studies in Egypt. Of all the Middle Eastern countries, he chose Egypt as his first destination since it was the country, people and the Arabic dialect he knew best from listening to his teacher al-Ṭanṭāwī. The scholarly purpose of his journey was to gather material about, and study, the Arabic dialects, a subject related to his docent's thesis and something few scholars had had an interest in studying before. He wrote, 'One of the greatest and most unfortunate shortcomings in Arabic Philology is the lack of research into the different dialects of the Arabic language and their impact on the development of that language in general'.

According to the itinerary, to help achieve his purpose, Wallin would first live in Cairo and study Arabic with the learned men at al-Azhar University. From Cairo, he would travel to Upper Egypt and from there across the Red Sea to Yemen. In Yemen, he would study Himyarite inscriptions and then travel northwards to Mecca. In Mecca, he intended to stay for a month and thereafter travel further into the Arabian Peninsula and gather material about the dialects and the geography of that area. His plan, of course, had several unrealistic elements. Wallin did not even speak Arabic very well when he left Helsinki, but planned to live in Mecca as a Muslim only a year later. In the end, he stayed away for more than double the time, visiting the Arabian Peninsula twice, making a shorter trip to Sinai and Syro-Palestine, and extending his second trip into the Arabian Peninsula to also include Persia.

Wallin left Helsinki in July 1843 and arrived in Alexandria in December the same year. The journey through Europe took him about six months. The reason for this length of time is that he was robbed and assaulted by a young man in Paris and was consequently hospitalised for six weeks. Arriving in Alexandria, Wallin was still travelling in his Western clothes and took up residence in a hotel for foreigners. Only on the day before he stepped on board the boat that took him to Cairo did he dress himself in the attire of the local Muslims. Although Wallin had been uncertain when he arrived in Egypt about which identity to choose, Western or Muslim, after living for about a month in the country, he chose to adopt that of a Muslim. Wallin had realised that a Muslim identity was the only way to acquire an inside perspective on the Muslim community and thus succeed in carrying out the scholarly purpose of his journey. He adopted several Muslim identities during the following six years – the one he used most was as the doctor 'Abd al-Wālī from Bukhara in Central Asia. All his identities were readily accepted, probably because of his dark hair and beard, and because he spoke fluent

Arabic after only a few months of living in Cairo.

EGYPT

In Cairo, Wallin spent his time taking classes in Arabic and reading the Koran. In the evenings, he sat in cafés and listened to the storytellers, or in the mosques and listened to the discussions of learned men. He lived in the house of his Arabic teacher, a sheikh named 'Alī Nida al-Barrani, and with the 'Alī family. After approximately ten months, Wallin began to feel restless. He was already making plans for his first journey to the Arabian Peninsula, but it took more time than he had estimated. Therefore, when he was given the opportunity to travel to Upper Egypt in the company of Hubert Sattler, an Austrian painter, and Christian Schleddehaus, a German doctor, he decided to join them. They travelled in a *dhahabiyya* and went all the way up the Nile to Wadi Halfa and back.

Wallin went on the Nile journey because he was offered the opportunity, not because he was especially interested in the ancient Egyptian sites at that time. However, during the journey his attitude towards Egypt's ancient history and religion changed as he began to appreciate there was more of a connection between the ancient and the modern country than he had realised. Wallin was among the few early scholars who recognised that in order to understand modern Egypt and the Egyptians it was also necessary to understand their past.

Wallin also became impressed by the scholars of ancient Egypt whom he met when travelling the country. In Luxor, he met with Lepsius and the Prussian expedition. Of Lepsius he wrote: 'He had something particular simple and beautiful in his being, nothing of the vanity and flaccidity of the common halflearned. It showed in everything that he was the profound learned (man), who completely fascinated and taken by the greatness of his science, had forgotten about the glory and the fame that seems so attractive to the common scholars'.

THE MIDDLE EAST

After the return from Upper Egypt, Wallin began to prepare for his first journey into the Arabian Peninsula (Fig. 3.2), and in April 1845 he left Cairo. He adopted the persona of 'Abd al-Wālī, a Muslim doctor from Bukhara travelling on the Arabian Peninsula to vaccinate Bedouin tribes. The journey took him along the northern part of the peninsula from Suez to Ma'an and al-Jauf. Wallin stayed for four

months in al-Jauf before continuing to Jubba and Ḥā'il, and from there on to Medina and Mecca. He was the first westerner to travel along this route and make notes on the history of the cities and the people living there. The whole journey took him about a year. After Mecca, Wallin returned to Cairo because he needed the money from his scholarship that had been sent from Helsinki. He also had problems with his stomach due to the unbalanced diet among the Bedouin that mostly consisted of dates, and he needed to rest and recover.

During his stay in Mecca and Medina, Wallin did not write a diary, but after returning to Cairo, he wrote a letter to his professor in Helsinki, dated 29 March 1846: 'Now I am satisfied with my journey, since it went better than I could ever have hoped for. I have fulfilled all the duties of a Muslim pilgrim in Mecca and Medina, but I will not deny that I was filled with distress and fear throughout the journey. I did not linger long in Mecca, mostly because I was afraid of being exposed and also because I ran out of financial means, and further because I did not feel well and a fever persecuted me.'

After Mecca, Wallin wanted to continue south to Yemen, but because he had no money left and no way to obtain any, he had to return to Cairo. Also, he had been away for a year and had not received any news from his family during this time and was most eager to read the letters he knew would have been sent to him to Cairo.

Before his second journey to the peninsula, Wallin made a shorter trip to Sinai and Syro-Palestine. He visited Saint Catharine's Monastery in Sinai as well as Jerusalem and Damascus. This was a short tourist trip like the one he made to Upper Egypt, and he did not make any scholarly notes during his trip.

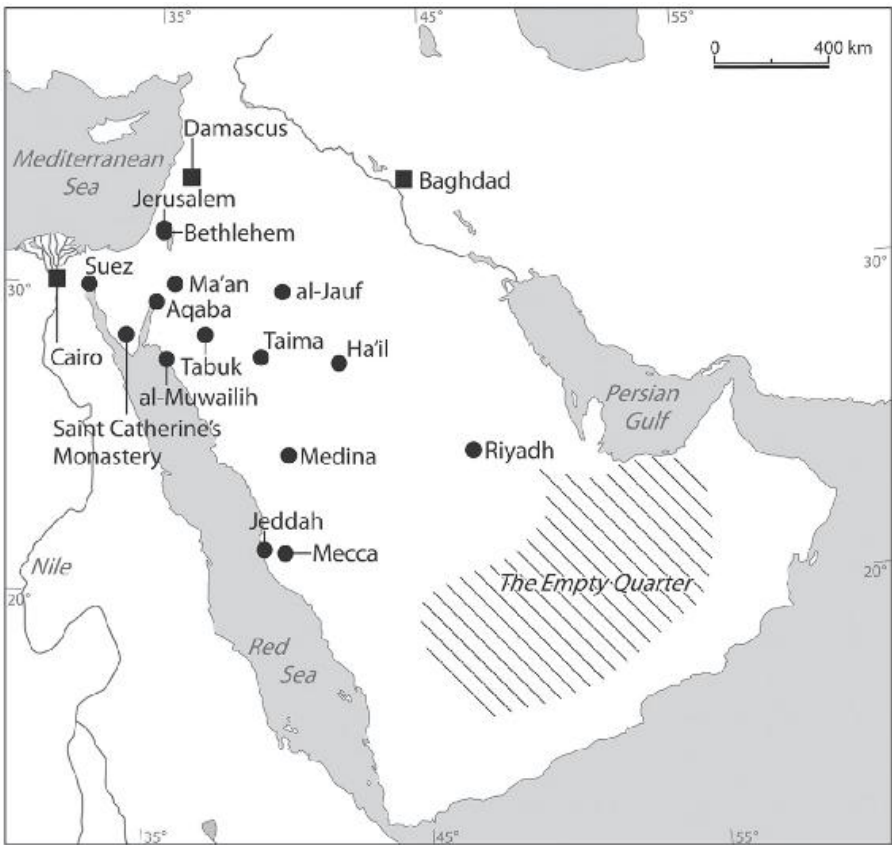


Figure 3.2: Georg August Wallin's journeys on the Arabian Peninsula, Sinai, and in the Holy Land. © The Society of Swedish Literature in Finland.

In the winter of 1847, Wallin again left Cairo for the Arabian Peninsula. This time, the plan was to travel all the way to the southern parts of the peninsula. From Suez, he went to Muwailih and from there to Tabūk and Taimā. In Hā'il he visited the friends he had made on his first journey who informed him that his western identity was known and his life would be in danger if he continued southwards to Riyadh and Yemen. Therefore, he headed back north and instead made a year-long journey in Persia (Fig. 3.3). If he had continued south, he would have been the first westerner to cross the desert area called al-Rub' al-Khālī. It was not until the 1930s that the Englishman Bertram Thomas became the first to make this crossing.

After his travels in Persia, Wallin left Cairo and returned home to Europe. He stayed some months in London and helped to draw a map of the Arabian Peninsula that was published by the Royal Geographical Society in 1852. He reached Helsinki in 1850 and was appointed professor of Oriental Literature.



Figure 3.3: Letter by Georg August Wallin, dated Baghdad 14 April 1847. © The Society of Swedish Literature in Finland.

Wallin died suddenly, in 1852, in the middle of making plans for a

VIEWS ON WESTERNERS

In Egypt, Wallin lived as a Muslim even though, especially in Cairo, he also had some western acquaintances. At the time, Egypt was popular among western travellers and scholars and many stayed and lived there for several years. Wallin came to study Arab dialects and did not have much interest in seeking the company of these westerners and did not attend any of the meetings of the societies and clubs that had been formed in Cairo. What he would have wanted to do was to meet Edward William Lane. Wallin had read Lane's *An Account of the Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* and was interested in discussing some things with him before travelling to Arabia. He tried to reach Lane on several occasions, but did not manage to locate Lane's house. Lane chose, especially during his third stay in Egypt from 1842 to 1849, to live by himself with his wife and sister in a house on the other side of town from where westerners chose to live. So Wallin and Lane never met, even though they had many common acquaintances; for example Lane's Arabic teacher, Ibrāhīm al-Dusūqī, and Fulgence Fresnel, who was among Lane's close friends.

Other westerners whom Wallin knew in Cairo were the German priest Johann Lieder and the German doctor Franz Pruner. But Wallin mostly used these learned men to gain access to the books he wanted to read before travelling to the Arabian Peninsula. In general, Wallin was very critical towards the strong western presence in Cairo and Egypt, and he felt that Islam and the Arab culture and language had lost its purity through the Egyptian pursuit of economic benefits from the west. When he met Rifā'a al-Ṭaḥṭāwī for the first time, he wrote in his diary later that evening that he felt embarrassed. al-Ṭaḥṭāwī was the learned man in charge of a group of young Egyptian men who had been sent to Paris by Muḥammad 'Alī to learn about western science and business and bring this knowledge back home to Egypt. We do not know the reason for Wallin's embarrassment, but presumably he suspected al-Ṭaḥṭāwī would recognise him as a westerner and was embarrassed because he was with his Egyptian friends. As already mentioned, Wallin pretended to be a doctor and the reason he met al-Ṭaḥṭāwī was because al-Ṭaḥṭāwī wanted Wallin to remove a tooth.

Wallin also met some of the young men who had been sent to Paris by Muḥammad 'Alī and of one of these he wrote in his diary for 25 August 1844: 'While we were sitting there came a man dressed as an Effendi speaking very good French. He was one of the young men the Pasha had sent from here to Paris to be educated as Parisian garçons.

It had worked almost too well for this man. He was completely French and seemed to have forgotten and even despise, if not his Arab mother tongue, at least his religion. He was also a political adversary against Egypt and its government'.

In general, Egypt and the Egyptians were a big disappointment for Wallin. In St Petersburg al-Ṭanṭāwī had told Wallin about Egypt, and it was based on these stories, and while still in Europe, that he had built his view of the East. He had dreamed of getting to know the original Arab with a pure mind and a pure religion but, arriving in Alexandria, it was a country and a people strongly under Ottoman and western influence that greeted him. He found the Egyptians narrow-minded and lazy and willing to resign themselves to higher authority without any kind of a fight. The free and natural man he had been looking for was nowhere to be found, at least not in Egypt.

But, after leaving the Arabian Peninsula, Wallin wrote in his diary on the evening of his first day of travel that he felt at home amongst the Bedouin. He writes:

'The Beduins themselves were delighted that the day had come to an end, and while laughing and talking they forgot about the hot sunshine and the hardship of the travel. It all made a good impact on my mind. In addition, the fresh air of the desert, here mixed with the scent of the green fields from Egypt and the tranquil sunny sky, gave my soul peace. I slept my first night with a foretaste of the peace and rest I would later have during so many nights sleeping on the sand in the desert'.

Thus, Wallin did not feel let down by the Bedouin and after his return to Cairo, and later in Helsinki, it was their free life and the desert with its camels that he dreamed of and to which he longed return. On the Arabian Peninsula, he did not recognise much western influence and his only remark is that everything coming from Egypt was regarded with suspicion. This was due to the fact that, on behalf of the Sultan in Constantinople, Muḥammad 'Alī had taken Mecca and other parts of the Arabian Peninsula from the Wahhabis, who later in the 1840s retook these areas, just a few years before Wallin began his journeys. On several occasions, the people he visited and stayed with for some days accused him of being a spy sent from Egypt by Muḥammad 'Alī. But only on a few occasions did anybody express suspicions about the purity of his Islamic faith or accuse him of being a Christian. Wallin was among the first westerners to travel on the Arabian Peninsula and he was among the first 20 to visit Mecca and Medina and write about it. The race of who would be the first westerner to explore the Arabian Peninsula and cross al-Rub' al-Khālī had not yet begun and the Bedouin were therefore not as wary about foreigners as they would be at the end of the 19th century.

Wallin wrote mostly in Swedish and, because of his sudden death, he did not publish much himself. His records, in the National Library of Finland, have therefore remained unknown to the international community of scholars and producing a critical edition is essential for making them available to this wider audience. Most of the preserved material consists of the diaries and letters Wallin wrote during his journeys and sent back home to Finland. The letters are written in Swedish, except for those to al-Ṭanṭāwī in St Petersburg, which are in Arabic. One peculiarity of Wallin is the brief notes he made during those desert journeys on the Arabian Peninsula and in Persia. A man pretending to be a Muslim in the Middle East was not expected to make notes in a foreign language in the desert. For this reason, Wallin wrote his notes in Swedish using the Arabic script. The notes consist of only a couple of sentences per day and tell about the length of daily journeys and weather conditions. In sufficiently peaceful locations, Wallin drew on his memory to supplement these notes into more extensive diary entries or letters in Swedish. The notes functioned as important memory lists of distances, places, people and the weather. For these notes, Wallin created an own alphabet by replacing the Swedish letters with the corresponding Arabic ones. His writing is mainly based on the pronunciation of Swedish and not how it is written and thus the words created often have a quite original form.



In the autumn of 2008, the Society of Swedish Literature in Finland initiated an ongoing publication project entitled *Georg August Wallin's Writings*. According to the publication plan, the publication will consist of seven parts. Of these, the first five parts have appeared under the titles: *Studieåren och resan till Alexandria (The Student Years and the Journey to Alexandria)*, 2010; *Det första året i Egypten 1843–1844 (The First Year in Egypt 1843–1844)*, 2011; *Kairo och resan till Övre Egypten 1844–1845 (Cairo and the Journey to Upper Egypt 1844–1845)*, 2012; and *Färderna till Mekka och Jerusalem 1845–1847 (The Journeys to Mecca and Jerusalem 1845–1847)*, 2013, and *Norra Arabiska halvön och Persien 1847–1849 (The Northern Arabian Peninsula, and Persia 1847–1849)*, 2014. As can be seen from these titles, the material is chronological. Part Six will contain material from Wallin's journey home and Part Seven material from his last years in Helsinki. Each part also contains introductory articles; commentaries; explanations of words; indexes of persons and places; a list of changes made by Wallin in the originals; a description of the manuscripts; and a bibliography.

The Relative Contributions of William John Bankes and Charles Barry to the Early Plans of Gerasa/Jerash (Jordan): Evidence from the Bankes and Barry Archives

Don Boyer

William John Bankes spent 11 days visiting Gerasa in 1816 and 1818, and Charles Barry made a two-day visit in 1819. The results of their joint efforts are retained in the Gerasa (Jerash) portfolio of plans and drawings in the Bankes archive held in the Dorset History Centre, together with material on Barry held at the Royal Institute of British Architects. It is argued that Barry's contribution is out of proportion to the short time he spent on the site, with his 'General Plan of the Ruins of Djerash' – compiled from information collected by both parties – being unsurpassed in quality for many decades.

INTRODUCTION

The published records of early 19th century visitors to Gerasa (modern Jerash) are an important source of relevant and sometimes unique information on the state of the ruins, however the largely unpublished plan and drawing archives relating to the separate visits by William John Bankes and Charles Barry in 1816–19 stand apart in terms of their scope, quality and archaeological significance.

William John Bankes (1786–1855), the well-known explorer and Egyptologist, travelled extensively in the Near East in 1816–18 in the company of a variety of fellow travellers. His travels encompassed Egypt and the southern Levant, paying particular attention to biblical Palestine and the region of the Decapolis. He was a poor diarist but a

prolific artist, and many of the drawings, sketches, plans, watercolours and notes of his travels survive in the archives of the Dorset History Centre (DHC) at Dorchester. Bankes published very little of this material himself; his main contribution is widely believed to have been to the book by Giovanni Finati, an accomplished traveller who acted as his interpreter and assistant, that was published in 1830. Much of what is known of Bankes' travels through the Decapolis is recorded in contemporary publications (see Bibliography) by fellow travellers Thomas Legh,¹ James Silk Buckingham (1821), Charles Irby and James Mangles (1823) and Giovanni Finati (1830). Bankes' own notes on his travels in the Decapolis have more recently been published by Bowsher (1997), while his drawings have been published for his travels in Egypt and Nubia (see Bibliography: Usick 1998a, 1998b, 2002) and the Hauran (see Bibliography: Sartre-Fauriat 2004), his travels among the Decapolis cities are less well known and the plan and drawing portfolio for 'Jerash' (Gerasa) in the Bankes archive at DHC remains largely unpublished.

Charles Barry (1795–1860), who was to become one of Britain's leading 19th century architects, travelled in the Near East in 1818–19. In contrast to Bankes, Barry's travels have attracted less attention. Charles Barry's son, Alfred, published a biography in the 19th century,² and in 1986 his great-grand-daughter Kathleen Adkins privately published parts of his travel diaries, but the bulk of his travels east of the Jordan and, in particular, his visit to Jerash in May 1819 have not been published. His travel diaries and a few pen-and-ink drawings of his visit to Jerash are retained in the Charles Barry archives in the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) in London, but a far greater number of his drawings and sketches are retained in the Bankes 'Jerash' drawing archive at DHC.

Bankes and Barry met quite by chance in Egypt on 13 January 1819 while travelling on the Nile.³ Barry spent a day with Bankes and was impressed by his drawing portfolio, but the two travellers did not travel together in the Near East after that first brief encounter.⁴ Barry was recognised as a gifted artist and had been hired by David Baillie, a wealthy Scottish traveller whom he had met in Delos on 29 June 1818,⁵ to provide sketches of their travels. Baillie subsequently accompanied Barry on many of his travels in the Near East, and Barry settled their contract by handing Baillie around 500 drawings when the two parted company in Tripoli on 13 June 1819 on Barry's return journey to England.⁶

Gerasa was one of the cities of the Decapolis, a group of Hellenistic colonies established in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BCE that later formed a highly urbanised part of the Roman provinces of Judaea/Palaestina, Syria and Arabia. Today, the region of the Decapolis lies mainly in northern Jordan but extends into Syria and the West Bank (Fig. 4.1). While the name 'Decapolis' implies that there were ten cities, there may have been as many as 18.⁷ In the Roman-Byzantine period, Gerasa lay on an important trade route west of the Via Nova Traiana, with direct road links to the Decapolis cities of Philadelphia (Amman) and Pella and indirect links to other Decapolis cities and Bostra.

Geographically, Gerasa is set in the eastern Ajlun highlands in modern-day north-western Jordan and sits amongst fertile valleys with strong natural springs and relatively high rainfall. Although a human presence in the immediate vicinity can be traced back to the Acheulian period of the Lower Palaeolithic,⁸ more than 150,000 years BP, more significant settled occupation of the site had its beginnings in the Bronze and Iron Ages. The settlement grew in size during the Hellenistic period in the first two centuries BCE; however, the site was transformed in the early Roman period in the late 1st and 2nd centuries CE with the construction of major internal roads and large public monuments, and became a middle-sized provincial town. A strengthening interest in Christianity in the city in the 4th century initiated a major phase of church building that extended into the 7th century, having reached a climax in the 6th century. A total of 21 Christian churches have been documented in and around the city,⁹ and the ruins of many can still be seen.

Urban settlement probably started to decline after the 4th century, but continued until at least the 9th century, surviving the Islamic takeover in the mid-7th century and a major earthquake in the mid-8th century.¹⁰ Contemporary sources tell us that the city was in ruins and deserted by the 12th century, but it is likely that some sort of settlement continued until at least the end of the 16th century, as an Ottoman census conducted in 1597 records a dozen families living in a small village-sized community¹¹ and archaeological evidence of Mamluk occupation has been reported from several locations within the city. Permanent occupation of the site ceased sometime after the 16th century, with no permanent settlement at the time of the earliest western visitors in the early 19th century.

EARLY VISITORS TO GERASA

The first recorded visits by Europeans before the end of the

Napoleonic wars were those by Ulrich Seetzen in 1806¹² and John Lewis Burckhardt in 1812.¹³ Disguised as Muslims, they found deserted ruins, but conditions were so dangerous that they each spent less than a day in the city and had little opportunity to record interesting monuments or even take detailed notes.

The end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815 made travel to Europe and the Near East safer, and the tradition of the Grand Tour favoured by the moneyed leisure class in Britain was resumed in earnest. In terms of the Near East, the preferred destination was Egypt,¹⁴ but some early travellers to Egypt also took the opportunity to visit the Holy Land and the more adventurous of these attempted to travel to the then dangerous territory east of the Jordan River. There was an increase in European interest in the area, with four parties known to have visited Gerasa in the period 1816–19 (Table 4.1).

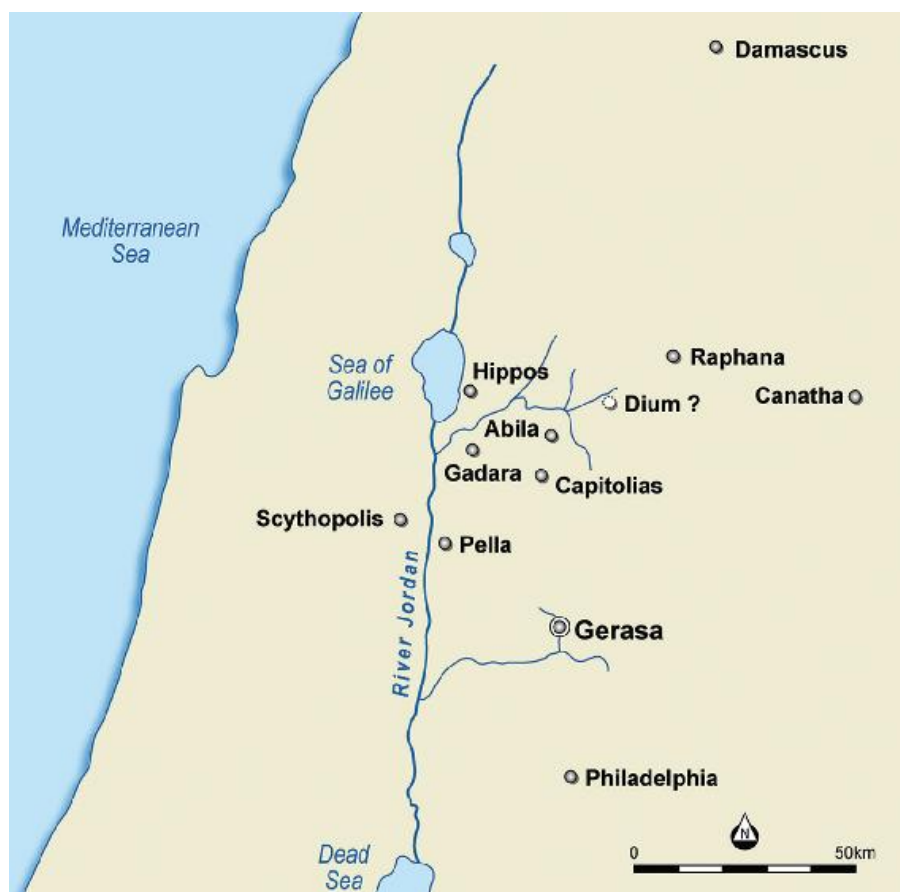


Figure 4.1: The Region of the Decapolis. Don Boyer. Reproduced with permission of the National Trust.

First among the visitors that followed Seetzen and Burckhardt were parties organised by William John Bankes, who visited the site three times between 1816 and 1818,¹⁵ and by Charles Barry in May 1819. These two young Englishmen were later to have a sustained working relationship in connection with architectural changes to Bankes' house at Soughton Hall in Flintshire, and later to the family seat at Kingston Lacy in Dorset.

They came from quite different social backgrounds. Bankes had a privileged, upper-class upbringing. He read Classics at Cambridge, and was wealthy even before he inherited Kingston Lacy in 1834. He had a thirst for knowledge of classical culture and travel that remained with him until his death. In contrast, Barry was born into a middle-class family and had a relatively humble education. At the time of his travels, he had just qualified as an architect and, with a small inheritance, was keen to visit Europe and the Near East for professional study.

The two men met briefly by chance on the Nile in Egypt in January 1819, and on his return to England in 1820 Barry worked on combining their joint surveying and recording efforts from their visits to Gerasa into a single, detailed plan of the city and completing architectural drawings of high quality of many of the monuments. There is no correspondence between Bankes and Barry in the DHC archives prior to 1830, but it is presumed that they were in regular contact, especially after Barry's return to England in 1820. Lewis suggests that Barry's visit to Jerash and his collection of notes and drawings of the major monuments was at Bankes' request;¹⁶ however, while this is quite possible, there is no reference to such an arrangement in Barry's travel diaries.

Referring to Table 4.1, it can be seen that, in terms of the length of stay and size of the travelling party, the visits by Bankes and Barry stand out compared to other visiting parties in the early part of the 19th century. In fact, a review of publications by western visitors to Gerasa in the 19th century shows that it was unusual for western visitors to stay in Jerash for more than one to two days, and many did not stay overnight. Even more unusual was a second visit, much less the third by Bankes, which was probably unparalleled until the later part of the century. The high quality and accuracy of the records left by the Bankes and Barry parties is seen, therefore, as being partly the result of the length of time spent on site and partly the number and experience of party members, the latter being an important factor when contemplating the surveying and recording of a large pile of ruins in a relatively short space of time in a hostile environment. Bankes' 1818 party included two sea captains (Irby and Mangles) who

would have been experienced in the use of a compass and in general survey work, plus Thomas Legh an experienced traveller. Barry's 1819 party likewise included two captains – Du Cane (or Ducane) and Butler – plus three experienced travellers: Messrs. David Baillie, John Godfrey and Thomas Wyse. An estimate of the amount of useful work that might be obtained from such parties of mixed individuals – if properly organised – can be made by multiplying the number of European members of the party by the number of days spent at the ruins to determine the number of 'man-days' on site. It also allows the contributions of other visitors to be placed in context. Buckingham, for example, describing his surveying activities on his separate solo visit to the site on the morning of 8 March 1816 claims 'the more comprehensive account of its (Jerash) ruins ... accompanied by a ground plan of the city, and many of its separate edifices, drawn entirely from the notes, bearings and measurements taken by myself on this last occasion',¹⁷ after 'having gone over and examined alone, nearly every part of the principal edifices by moonlight' on the previous evening.¹⁸ This claim for the activities of one man (plus two Arab guides) over so large a site for half a day is hardly credible.

Table 4.1: List of western visitors to Gerasa (Jerash) 1805–19.

Visit No.	Leader	Year	Date	Days on site	Party size*	Man days on site#
1	Seetzen	1805	9th March	<1	1	<1
2	Burckhardt	1812	2nd May	<1	1	<1
3	Bankes (1)	1816	31st Jan–1st Feb	2	3	6
4	Buckingham	1816	7th–8th March	2	1	2
5	Bankes (2)	1818	14th–20th March	7	4	28
6	Bankes (3)	1818	18th–19th June	2	4	8
7	Barry	1819	5th–6th May	2	6	12
8	Fuller	1819	17th October	<1	1	<1

* Europeans only, excluding servants; # Calculated by multiplying the party size by the number of days on site

The individual contributions to the work of surveying and recording of the various sites at Gerasa during the visits of Bankes' parties in March 1816 and 1818 require further analysis. Acklom¹⁹ takes the view that most of the surveying in 1818 was done by Irby and Mangles, using as justification the statement by the latter²⁰ that on 19 March 'We endeavoured to finish with Djerash this day, but though we were at work till dark (Irby and myself measuring, and Mr. Bankes drawing, copying inscriptions, &c.), we could not complete our work'. While it is very likely that much of the surveying work was carried out

by Irby and Mangles, there would also have been contributions from the other party members. Notes and comments in Bankes' handwriting are evident on many sketches in the small portfolio of sketches and notes grouped under D/BKL/HJ III A 46 in the DHC archive, and in two cases, sketches have been drawn on reused envelopes addressed to Bankes, indicating that Bankes himself was directly involved in at least some of the survey work.

THE W. J. BANKES 'JERASH' DRAWING AND PLAN ARCHIVE

The 'Jerash' drawing and plan archives of W. J. Bankes relating to his visits to Gerasa are held at the DHC in Dorchester, UK under the archive reference D/BKL/HJ III A. There are 53 numbered items in this archive attributable to Gerasa.²¹ None of the numbered items are signed and only one is dated. Each item relates to a single sheet of paper apart from HJ III A 46 which, as already noted, is a portfolio of 15 rough field sketches and notes, many of which are on small scraps of paper.

The contents of the DHC 'Jerash' drawing archive D/BKL/HJ III A may be summarised as follows:

MATERIAL ATTRIBUTABLE TO BANKES

- A plan of the city and its monuments titled 'Plan of the Ruins of Djerash in the District of Adjeloon beyond the River Jordan' (HJ III A 21) prepared by Bankes from information collected during his 2-day visit at the end of January 1816, plus a copy of the same plan in five separate sheets (HJ III A 25, 27, 34, 47, 48). Bowsher states that there is no key to the monuments shown on this plan,²² however there is a barely legible key to monuments labelled 'A' to 'S' on drawing HJ III A 25.
- Six watercolour scenes (HJ III A 2, 3, 6a, 6b, 7, 13a, 13b, 19, 20, 22, and 37), of which five are duplicated; two examples are shown in Figure 4.2. A pencil drawing of one scene (HJ III A 5) may be a draft for another watercolour that is not in the Bankes archive and may not have been finished. While not signed, the watercolours are typical of Bankes in terms of style and colouration. Bankes used dark, sombre colours in his watercolour scenes. Usick²³ describes Bankes' watercolour views of Egypt as 'murky' and the same can be said of his watercolours of Gerasa.²⁴
- Two identical part-watercolour views of the South Theatre (HJ III A 16a, 16b).²⁵

- An indexed portfolio of rough field sketches and notes of buildings and structures (HJ III A 46). The information on these sketches was used by Barry in the construction of his ‘General Plan of the Rvins of Djerash’. The index of these sketches is in Barry’s handwriting and lists 24 items but only 15 are in the archive. The material is believed to have been the product of the surveying and recording activities by Bankes’ party in March and June 1818. Some of the notes on the sketches appear to be in Bankes’ own hand. Although undated, some of the material can be dated by reference to the publication by Irby and Mangles. The survey of Hadrian’s Arch, the Cardo and the Oval Piazza can be dated to 17 March 1818,²⁶ the survey of the walls to 18 March 1818,²⁷ and some of the churches to June 1818.²⁸ The numbering of the listed items may have originally been referenced to a plan of the city drawn up by Bankes’ party in 1818, but if so it appears not to have survived. The listed items do not match the numbering used by Barry on his ‘General Plan of the Rvins of Djerash’, or those identified in Bankes’ 1816 plan on drawing HJ III A 25.



Figure 4.2: Watercolour views of Jerash by William John Bankes: a) View of Gerasa Ruins from Qairawan Spring (D/BKL/HJ IIIA 7); b) View of Oval Piazza and Temple of Zeus (D/BKL/HJ IIIA 37). © Dorset History Centre, Reproduced with permission.

MATERIAL ATTRIBUTABLE TO BARRY FROM HIS 1819 VISIT

- A draft plan of the city titled ‘Jerash 1819’ compiled by Barry

from his visit in May 1819 (HJ III A 23).

- A final drawing and draft of the Temple of Artemis (HJ III A 36, 31) and the Oval Piazza (HJ III A 35, 32) plus a draft of a view of the Nymphaeum and Propylaeum (HJ III A 26; the final drawing is in the RIBA archive). The material was collected by Bankes' party and compiled/fair drawn by Barry.²⁹
- A plan of the city titled 'General Plan of the Rvins of Djerash' (HJ III A 1a) compiled by Barry largely from material collected by Bankes' party during their visits in March and June 1818. The omission of some features evident on Bankes' 1816 plan (for example, the Synagogue Church and another possible church west of the Temple of Artemis) suggests that only material collected by Bankes' party in 1818 was considered for inclusion in Barry's compilation. Barry's authorship is confirmed by notes on the plan in his handwriting, by comments made by Barry during the 1826 libel trial between Bankes and Buckingham,³⁰ and by the comment on a smaller copy of the same plan that forms part of HJ III A 18a prepared for the libel trial where it is stated that it is 'Mr Barry's plan drawn from the observations and admeasurements of Messrs. Bankes, Mangles and Irby made in 1818 collated with his own admeasurements and memorandums made on the spot in 1819'. A draft of a similar plan appears in the archive as HJ III A 1b. However, there are some important differences and the authorship and date of this draft is uncertain. The monuments are labelled 'a' to 't', but the index itself is not in the DHC archive.
- Drawings of the elevation and architecture of the Temple of Zeus (HJ III A 15);³¹ plans of the South Gate, the Tomb of Germanus (at Birketein) and a tomb south of Hadrian's Arch (all on HJ III A 11) and plans of the North Tetrastyle and the South Tetrastyle (HJ III A 14);
- Plan drawings of the Temple of Artemis (HJ III A 10) and Temple of Zeus (part of HJ III A 39a);
- Combined plan and elevation drawings of the South Theatre (HJ III A 41), North Theatre (HJ III A 40), Nymphaeum (HJ III A 42), Hadrian's Arch (HJ III A 43), and the Propylaeum (HJ III A 44);
- A portfolio of three composite drawings plus drafts relating to city plans (HJ III A 18a, b, c) temples (HJ III A 39 a, b) and theatres (HJ III A 38a, b) prepared for the libel court case brought against Bankes by Buckingham in 1826; the handwriting appears to be Barry's.

Twenty of the numbered items – around 40%, in the Bankes ‘Jerash’ portfolio at DHC can be attributed to Barry, and if the attribution to Barry of the seven composite plans prepared for the Bankes-Buckingham libel case is correct, then the total rises to 27 or slightly more than half of the total.

THE CHARLES BARRY ARCHIVES AT THE RIBA

Charles Barry’s travel diaries for his trip to the Near East, including Gerasa, are retained in the RIBA archives. Barry spent only around 24 hours at Gerasa (5–6 May 1819), but he wrote 11 pages of notes in his diary, including descriptions of ten monuments and buildings. He concentrated on the ruins on the west side of Wadi Jerash, visiting only Qairawan Spring, the East Baths and the Church of the Prophets, Apostles and Martyrs on the east side of the city. He prepared a plan of the city based on his visit (VOL/42), and this together with final drawings of views of the Temple of Zeus (VOL/42: 23) and the South Theatre (VOL/42: 24) and detailed plans of the ‘Temple of Hercvles’ (VOL/42) and the North and South Theatres (VOL/18: 27 and 28) also prepared during his 1819 visit are in the RIBA archives. The plans of the theatres are unusual in that they are dated.

A far greater number of Charles Barry’s plans and drawings, though, are in the Bankes archives at DHC, including drafts of some of the final drawings in the RIBA archives, although even the combined contents of the two archives are unlikely to represent Barry’s full portfolio of plans and drawings prepared following his own visit to the site in 1819. The total number of drawings prepared by Barry from his Gerasa visit is not known, but copies would have been provided to Baillie under the employment contract agreed between them.³² One drawing by Barry believed to be missing from the archives is a view entitled ‘The Roman Theatre at Djerash’ that Barry displayed at the Royal Academy in 1822,³³ which may have been based on the plan and coloured restored elevation retained at DHC in folder HJ III A 41. The spelling of the title of this drawing is interesting, as Barry always used the form ‘Jerash’ or ‘Ierash’³⁴ while Bankes consistently used ‘Djerash’, which suggests that if the title of the drawing is recorded correctly, then the information used in the drawing was likely sourced from Bankes rather than Barry’s own records. The detail shown in Barry’s plans of the ‘Temple of Hercvles’ and the theatres indicates that he must have taken more notes and measurements than appear in his travel diary. However, none of his original field sketch plans of these monuments have been located.

When the Bankes and Barry material from the DHC and RIBA archives is combined, a picture emerges of the compilation of a large body of material in preparation for publication, either as a ‘stand alone’ publication on Gerasa or in conjunction with material from other Decapolis cities. This was confirmed by Bankes himself who, in a footnote to Finati’s 1830 publication, says: ‘The plans, elevations, and views, taken of this noble city during my several visits, were arranged some years since, so as to be almost ready for publication, but other matters calling me off from them, it has been delayed. I shall hope, however, to be able to produce some portion of that and of other cities of the Decapolis and beyond Judaea in the course of the present year’.³⁵

The nature and terms of the arrangement agreed between Bankes and Barry regarding Barry’s compilation of Bankes’ Gerasa material is not known, nor is the location where the compilation took place. A letter from Barry to his brother, dated 17 September 1819, suggests that Barry was primarily interested in publishing his Egyptian material and was considering doing some joint work with Bankes on ‘something to do with the Architectural plates and descriptions of that part relating to Egypt’,³⁶ so the arrangements regarding the Gerasa material may not have been discussed before Barry’s return to England in September 1820. Sebba³⁷ states that Barry contacted Bankes in 1821, though he must have contacted him prior to this regarding the Gerasa material because he commented at Bankes’ libel trial that he compiled the ‘General Plan of the Rvins of Djerash’ in 1820 from material obtained from Bankes’ party.³⁸

The evidence that emerges from the archives is that the bulk of the material being prepared for publication was collected by Bankes’ party in 1818, with only a minor contribution coming from material collected by Barry’s party in 1819; however, Barry was responsible for preparing most of it for publication. This ‘publication portfolio’ included the following material more or less in final form:

- A detailed survey plan of the ruined city compiled by Barry in 1820 and titled ‘General Plan of the Rvins of Djerash’³⁹ (hereafter General Plan) (Fig. 4.3);
- Well executed pen/ink views by Barry, drawn from his own observations in 1819, of the Temple of Zeus, the Temple of Artemis, the North and South Theatres and the Oval Piazza;
- Final detailed plans and restored elevations for six major monuments and plan drawings for a number of minor ones, all drawn by Barry from material collected by Bankes and his party

in 1818; and

- Six watercolour views by Banks drawn in 1818.

There are direct artistic contributions from both Barry (the pen/ink views) and Banks (the watercolour views), with the balance being detailed compilations by Barry of original observations, measurements and sketches provided mostly by Banks' party. The high quality and accuracy of the draughtsmanship is a credit to Barry, with perhaps his greatest achievement being the compilation of the General Plan of the city from a number of very rough field sketches drawn on scraps of paper by Banks' party in 1818. The preparation work leading to publication was clearly quite advanced, and it is uncertain why the project was not completed. While Banks' well-known reluctance in such things⁴⁰ is likely to have been a major contributing factor, Barry's situation would also have had an impact.



Figure 4.3: 'General Plan of the Rvins of Djerash' compiled by Charles Barry in 1820 showing detail of the structures recorded within the walled city (D/BKL/HJ IIIA 1a). © Dorset History Centre, Reproduced with permission.

After two years away, Barry returned to Britain in 1820 needing funds to support his forthcoming marriage and to establish his architectural practice, and he may have lacked the time to finalise the publication. Baillie was keen to see Barry and Banks involved in a joint publication and wrote to Banks in January 1820 (DHC HJ: 1/125), nine months before Barry's return to England, offering Banks

access to 'any of Mr. Barry's drawings, plans or architectural details' in Baillie's possession to this end. Blissett also states that Baillie had given Barry permission to use this material for the same purpose before the two finally separated in Tripoli in 1819.⁴¹ Barry also hoped that Bankes' patronage could help him establish himself professionally, and Blissett offers evidence that it was Bankes who was behind Barry's successful bid for the design of the Commissioner's Church in Manchester in 1821.⁴²

COMPARISON OF BARRY'S 1820 PLAN OF THE CITY WITH OTHER VERSIONS

Although not without faults, the overall high quality of Barry's General Plan becomes obvious when compared with contemporary plans prepared by other visitors: examples are Burckhardt's plan from his hurried visit in 1812;⁴³ Bankes' visit with Buckingham and Finati in 1816 (HJ: III A 21); Buckingham's published plan allegedly drawn following from his own visit in March 1816;⁴⁴ and Barry's plan from his own brief visit in 1819 (HJ:III A 23). These contemporary plans are in fact sketches and contain many errors, as may be expected from drawings constructed in haste and in trying circumstances. One curious mistake in the General Plan is the line of the town walls in the vicinity of the South Gate, which does not follow the measurements recorded by Irby and Mangles and retained in DHC folder HJ: III A 46. This error is particularly odd, given that the wall alignment is correctly shown in the draft plan in DHC folder HJ: III A 1b.

The existence of the colonnaded street (Cardo) running the full length of the city on the west bank of Wadi Jerash provided the early visitors with a baseline to control the pedestrian surveys of the western part of the town, and the absence of an equivalent feature in the eastern part of the city accounts for some of the positioning errors of the monuments on the east bank. Burckhardt's outline of the walls is more accurate than that shown in either Bankes' 1816 plan or Barry's 1819 plan, which suggests that he may have circumnavigated part or all of the walls surrounding the city. Barry did not circumnavigate the walls in 1819, and neither did Bankes or Buckingham in 1816, and this is reflected in their plans from these visits. The survey of the walls recorded by Bankes' party in 1818 (Fig. 4.4a) and compiled by Barry in his General Plan is the first such survey carried out at Gerasa, and 50 years were to pass before the next survey of the walls by Warren in 1867.⁴⁵ Although other surveys by Rey in 1858,⁴⁶ Kiepert in 1870⁴⁷ and Schumacher⁴⁸ were to follow, the survey of the city reflected in Barry's 1820 General Plan was not

surpassed in terms of content and accuracy until the publication of a city plan by Kraeling⁴⁹ 120 years later, and it still compares well with modern plans.

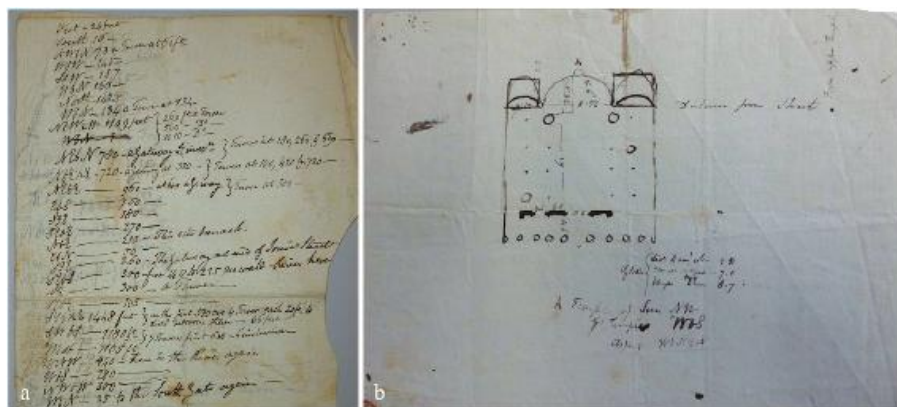


Figure 4.4: Examples of material collected during Bankes' 1818 visits to Jerash: a). Details of the Survey of the City Walls (D/BKL/HJ IIIA 46, sheet 13); b). Sketch of the plan of 'Bankes Church' east of East Baths (D/BKL/HJ IIIA 46, sheet 16). © Dorset History Centre, Reproduced with permission.

Barry's General Plan contains a number of unique references to buildings that are no longer visible and for which there are no other detailed records. Examples can be seen in the section of his plan covering the southeast quarter of the city. Crowfoot gained access to the Bankes drawing portfolio in the 1930's and he noted on an 1819 plan⁵⁰ the existence of a large church east of the East Baths, which he refers to as 'Bankes Church'.⁵¹ He also noted on Bankes' plan a large atrium and steps on the west side of the nearby Procopius Church, that were not present when he excavated the site in 1928.⁵² The original field sketches of these two sites are both located on drawing number 16 in folder HJ: III A 46 in the DHC archive. The field sketch of the Procopius Church shows a roughly square 15 × 15 m atrium at the western end of the church, with steps leading down (to the street) on the west side.⁵³

The field sketch of 'Bankes Church' shows it to be a triapsidal basilica building with five aisles, and with dimensions of 33 × 24 m including the atrium (Fig. 4.4b).⁵⁴ It is located north of the eastern extension of the South Decumanus,⁵⁵ which places it close to the site of a 6th-century mosaic floor interpreted to be part of a Byzantine palace when discovered beneath a house in 1993.⁵⁶ The recognition of the original sketch plan of 'Bankes Church' now makes it possible to clarify its internal structural arrangement. March's previous interpretation of this church identified from a small drawing on Barry's General Plan⁵⁷ was that it was a three-aisled basilica, while

Crowfoot was uncertain.⁵⁸ The sketch plan in the Bankes archive includes notes that appear to be in Bankes' handwriting and reveals four rows of internal columns, although only one column in each row is *in situ*, consistent with it being a five-aisled building. It was not recognised as a church at the time, merely being described as 'Building near Greatest Bath' under item 16 in the index in folder HJ: IIIA 46. This is the only five-aisled church identified to date in Gerasa and only two others are known in the Decapolis: the basilica-plan church at Gadara⁵⁹ and the Area E Church at Abila.⁶⁰

THE RELATIVE CONTRIBUTIONS OF BANKES AND BARRY

While there is some Gerasa material in the RIBA archives, a far greater number of Charles Barry's plans and drawings are in the Bankes archives at DHC, including drafts of some of the final drawings in the RIBA, and the information on the material in both archives needs to be combined to gain a fuller understanding of Barry's contribution to the early historical corpus on Gerasa.

Although the bulk of the material presented in the Gerasa 'publication portfolio' came from the visits to Gerasa by Bankes in 1818, it is clear that the lion's share of the compilation of the information contained in Bankes' original notes and sketches fell to Barry. It is also Barry who brought his drawing talents to bear on preparing a set of beautifully executed plans and elevations on the monuments, and in creating several interpretive restorations. The skills of the two men were complementary; both were gifted artists, but Barry's capacity to compile accurately the material collected, his attention to detail and his architectural drawing skills were essential in preparing the material for publication. Bankes' recognition of Barry's talents is recorded in his letter to Peel on 27 January 1825 where he gives his '... very high opinion, both of his (Barry's) natural tastes, talent and of his skill and proficiency'.⁶¹ Given Bankes' lack of interest in writing and organising his notes, it is also likely that Barry was the key driver in putting the material together into a portfolio for publication. He must have started this work almost immediately on his return to England in 1820, and his increasing distraction with establishing his architectural career in the ensuing years is seen as a contributory factor in understanding why publication did not eventuate.

CONTRIBUTION OF THE ARCHIVE MATERIAL TO THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING OF

The significance of the Bankes and Barry archival material lies in its uniqueness, in the quality and accuracy of the drawings themselves, and in the notes and descriptions that accompany them. The material was collected at a time when the city area was not occupied, and had probably not seen permanent habitation for some hundreds of years, and therefore had seen relatively little damage through human occupation in the post-Classical period.

The recognition of the original sketch plan of 'Bankes' Church' makes it possible to show that the building recorded by Bankes' party in 1818 between the East Baths and the Procopius Church was a five-aisled church, and not a three-aisled church as previously supposed, and the only five-aisled church so far identified at Gerasa. Another highlight of the collections is Barry's compilation of the 'General Plan of the Rvins of Djerash' dated to 1820. More than 80 years were to pass before Schumacher published his city plan in 1902, and a further 36 years were to pass before Kraeling published his more detailed city plan in 1938. In the intervening period, the monuments had deteriorated through natural processes and, in particular, through the impacts of permanent resettlement from 1878.

Therefore, the archive material provides a unique historical 'snapshot' of the condition of the ruins as they appeared in 1816–19, and includes details of some buildings for which there is now no trace or record. These archives include the earliest detailed drawings of the Gerasa ruins and should be regarded as fundamental sources of information for historical and archaeological scholars working on Gerasa.

Notes

- 1 Macmichael, W. (1819) *Journey from Moscow to Constantinople in the years 1817, 1818*, London: Murray.
- 2 Barry, A. (1867) *The Life and Works of Sir Charles Barry*. London: Murray.
- 3 Adkins, K. (1986) *Personal and Historical Extracts from the Travel Diaries (1817–1820) of Sir Charles Barry (1795–1860)*. Kathleen Adkins, p. 62.
- 4 Contrary to March's assertion that they were travelling companions and that Barry was Bankes' hired artist (March 2009, p. 119).
- 5 Adkins, K. (1986), p. 50.
- 6 Barry, A. (1867) *The Life and Works of Sir Charles Barry*. London, Murray, p. 42.
- 7 Kennedy, D. L. (2007) *Gerasa and the Decapolis: A Virtual Island in Northwest Jordan*, London, Duckworth, p. 10.
- 8 Kirkbride, D. V. W. (1958) 'Notes on a Survey of Pre-Roman Archaeological Sites near Jerash', *BIALon* 1: 9–20, pp. 9–11.
- 9 Darabseh, F. M. Q. (2010) *A Strategy for the Development of a Tourist Trail of the Decapolis Sites in Northern Jordan*, Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Birmingham, table 6.1.

- 10 Blanke, L. and Walmsley, A. G. (2010) 'The Danish-Jordanian Islamic Jarash Project – Season Report, 2010', Department of Cross Cultural & Regional Studies, University of Copenhagen, p. 5.
- 11 Hütteroth, W. and Abdulfattah, K. (1977) *Historical Geography of Palestine, Transjordan and Southern Syria in the Late 16th Century*. Erlangen, Fränkische Geographische Ges., p. 164.
- 12 Seetzen, U. J. (1810) *A Brief Account of the Countries adjoining The Lake of Tiberias, The Jordan, and the Dead Sea*. London, Palestine Association of London.
- 13 Burckhardt, J. L. (1822) *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land*. London, Murray.
- 14 Byron refers to 'swarms of English now in the Levant', Byron letter to Bankes, 18 December 1812 (Halleck 1851: 50).
- 15 A second visit to Jerash by the Bankes party in February 1818 could possibly be inferred from comment by Buckingham (1825, 132 footnote) that his own separate visit on 7–8 March 1818 was his third visit to Jerash. If it in fact occurred, it would presumably have been a very brief visit in the company of Bankes and Finati in February 1816, but there is no mention of it in the notes and diaries of Bankes or Finati and it is more likely that Buckingham counted the two-day visit on 31 January and 1 February 1816 as two separate visits.
- 16 Lewis, N. (2007) *A transcript of the journals written or dictated by W. J. Bankes during his journeys to and from Petra in 1818*. Croydon, Norman Lewis, p. 3.
- 17 Buckingham, J. S. (1825) *Travels Among the Arab tribes Inhabiting the Countries East of Syria and Palestine: including a journey from Nazareth to the mountains beyond the Dead Sea, and thence through the Plains of the Hauran to Bozra, Damascus, Tripoly, Lebanon, Baalbeck, and the Valley of the Orontes to Seleucia, Antioch and Aleppo. With an appendix, containing a refutation of certain unfounded calumnies industriously circulated against the author of this work*, by Mr. Lewis Burckhardt, Mr. William John Bankes, and the Quarterly Review. London, Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme Brown and Green, p. 132 footnote.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 128.
- 19 Acklom, G. (1995) *A Forgotten Era in Archaeology: The Research Conducted by Early British Travellers in Palestine from c. 1670 to 1825*, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Melbourne.
- 20 Irby, C. L. and Mangles, J. (1823) *Travels in Egypt and Nubia, Syria and Asia Minor: during the years 1817 & 1818*. London, White & Co, p. 314.
- 21 The plan drawing of a theatre, possibly attributable to Barry and numbered D/BKL: HJ III A 49 in the DHC archives, does not relate to a theatre at Gerasa.
- 22 Bowsheer, J. (1997) 'An early nineteenth century account of Jerash and the Decapolis: the records of John William Bankes', *Levant* 29: 227–246, p. 236.
- 23 Usick, P. H. (1998a) *William John Bankes collection of drawings and manuscripts relating to Ancient Nubia*, 2 vols, PhD thesis, University of London, p. 21.
- 24 March attributes the watercolour HJ: IIIA 2 to 'Berry' (sic) (March 2009: 66, fig. 12.8).
- 25 Part-watercolour views are a feature of Bankes' Egyptian drawing portfolio (see Usick, 1998a, p. 30).
- 26 Irby, C. L. and Mangles, J. (1823) *Travels in Egypt and Nubia, Syria and Asia Minor: during the years 1817 & 1818*, London: White & Co, p. 311.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 312.
- 28 *Ibid.*, p. 476.
- 29 It is possible that some of Barry's own observations and measurements were used in the compilation of some of this material.
- 30 Buckingham, J. S. (1826) *Verbatim Report of The Action for Libel in The Case of Buckingham versus Bankes, Tried in The Court of King's Bench*. London, Cheese, Gordon & Co, p. 69–70.

- 31 Referred to as the Temple of Artemis in the DHC catalogue.
- 32 Following Baillie's death, Barry's portfolio was purchased by John Wolfe Barry (see Adkins, 1986, p. 77) and is now presumed to be in private hands.
- 33 Blissett, D. (1983) *Sir Charles Barry (1795–1860): A reassessment of His Travels and Early Career*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Oxford Polytechnic, p. 132.
- 34 Barry sometimes uses Roman letters in the titles of his drawings. Examples are 'RVINS', 'IERASH' and 'HERCVLES'.
- 35 Finati, G. (1830) *The Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Giovanni Finati*. London, Murray, pp. 148–49.
- 36 Blissett, D. (1983), pp. 169–70.
- 37 Sebba, A. (2009) *The Exiled Collector. William Bankes and the Making of an English Country House*. Stanbridge, Dovecote Press, p. 121.
- 38 Buckingham, J. S. (1826), pp. 69–70.
- 39 While described elsewhere as 'Mr. Barry's plan drawn from the observations and admeasurements of Messrs. Bankes, Mangles and Irby made in 1818 collated with his own admeasurements and memorandums made on the spot in 1819', there appears to be relatively minor use of information obtained by Barry in 1819 in its compilation.
- 40 Regarding publication, Bankes confided in a letter to his friend Byron in 1822 that 'I am always thinking of it, and from a strange mixture of indolence with industry always deferring it. I hate, and always did, method and arrangement, and this is what my materials want' (quoted in Mitchell, 1994, p. 25 – see Bibliography).
- 41 Blissett, D. (1983), p. 169.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p. 128.
- 43 Burckhardt, J. L. (1822), opp. p. 264.
- 44 Buckingham, J. S. (1821), p. 342.
- 45 Abujaber, R. S. and Cobbing, F. J. (2005) *Beyond the River. Ottoman Transjordan in Original Photographs*. London, Stacey International.
- 46 Rey, M. E. G. (1861) *Voyage dans le Haouran et aux bords de la mer Morte exécuté pendant les années 1857 et 1858*. Paris, A. Bertrand, plates XIX–XX.
- 47 Baedeker, K. (1876) *Palestine and Syria. Handbook for Travellers*. Leipzig, Baedeker, p. 392.
- 48 Schumacher, G. (1902) 'Dscherasch', *ZDPV* 25: 109–77, plate 6.
- 49 Kraeling, C. H. (1938) *Gerasa: City of the Decapolis*. New Haven, Connecticut, ASOR, Plan 1.
- 50 Presumably Barry's 1820 General Plan (HJ: III A 1a).
- 51 Crowfoot, J. W. (1941) *Early Churches in Palestine*. London, Oxford University Press for the British Academy.
- 52 Kraeling, C. H. (1938), p. 260.
- 53 Boyer, D. D. (Forthcoming) *The Churches of Gerasa: Fresh Insights from the Records of 19th Century Visitors*.
- 54 March suggests that 'Bankes Church' is known only from one plan by Barry in the Bankes archives (see March, 2009, p. 119), however it is shown on Barry's General Plan (HJ: III A 1a), on the draft city plan HJ: III A 1b, and as an original field sketch in drawing 16 in folder HJ: III A 46.
- 55 March places it south of the eastern extension of the South Decumanus (see March, 2009, p. 54).
- 56 Z'ubi, I., Gatier, P.-L., Piccirillo, M. and Seigne, J. (1994) 'Note sur une mosaïque à scène bachique dans un palais époque byzantine à Jérash', *Liber Annuus* XLIV: 539–46. The site excavated by Z'ubi et al. may be that seen by Crowfoot in the 1930s who commented, rather enigmatically, that '(the site of 'Bankes Church') is probably identical with one of which we saw a fragment

- under a Circassian's house.' (see Crowfoot, 1941, p. 70).
- 57 March, C. (2009) *Spatial and Religious Transformations in the Late Antique Polis: a Multidisciplinary Analysis with a Case-study of the City of Gerasa*. Oxford, Archaeopress, p. 119.
 - 58 Crowfoot, J. W. (1941) *Early Churches in Palestine*. London, Oxford University Press for the British Academy, p. 70.
 - 59 Chambers, A. C. (2009) *Re-Centering the Temple: The Origin and Expansion of the Decapolis Churches, 4th–7th c. CE*. Unpublished PhD thesis, Miami University, p. 178.
 - 60 Menninga, C. (2004) 'The Unique Church at Abila of the Decapolis', *Near Eastern Archaeology* 67 (1): 40–49.
 - 61 Quoted in Sebba, A. (2009), p. 121.

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- industriously circulated against the author of this work, by Mr. Lewis Burckhardt, Mr. William John Bankes, and the Quarterly Review. London, Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme Brown and Green.
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Jean-Jacques Rifaud's Lithographs – His Drawings of Egyptian Archaeology, Natural History, Manners and Customs

Marie-Cécile Bruwier

FROM MARSEILLES TO ALEXANDRIA

The young Jean-Jacques Rifaud was born in 1786 and raised in Marseilles, France. He was trained as an *ébéniste*, but he always considered himself a woodcarver and sculptor in stone. At the age of 17, he undertook a 'Tour de France' as a 'companion', seeking to learn and be trained in numerous different workshops. He ended his 'tour' in Paris in 1805. At first, he earned his living as a sculptor, notably making furniture featuring Egyptian elements. Egyptomania was prevalent at that period and inspired, in some ways, the 'Empire style'. As a result, the young Rifaud dreamt of an (economically) impossible journey to Egypt.

During this period, Rifaud joined the Freemasons. Later, he was conscripted into the French Army. In Spain, he was taken prisoner and transported to the Balearic Islands. Rather than going back to France, he travelled to the Levant, visiting Malta, Smyrna and Cyprus, before sailing on to Egypt.

He arrived in Alexandria in January 1814, intending to open a sculptor's workshop there. Eventually, he was hired by the French Consul-General Bernardino Drovetti (1776–1852).

In his early days in Egypt, Rifaud travelled with Drovetti and Frédéric Cailliaud (1787–1869), a French mineralogist, geologist and collector of stones and mineral samples. The travelling companions visited the temples of Abu Simbel and passed the second cataract of the Nile in 1816. In Nubia, Rifaud drew the monuments (Fig. 5.1) and acquired two young Nubian servant girls, with whom he had children, and who attended him until the end of his Egyptian sojourn.

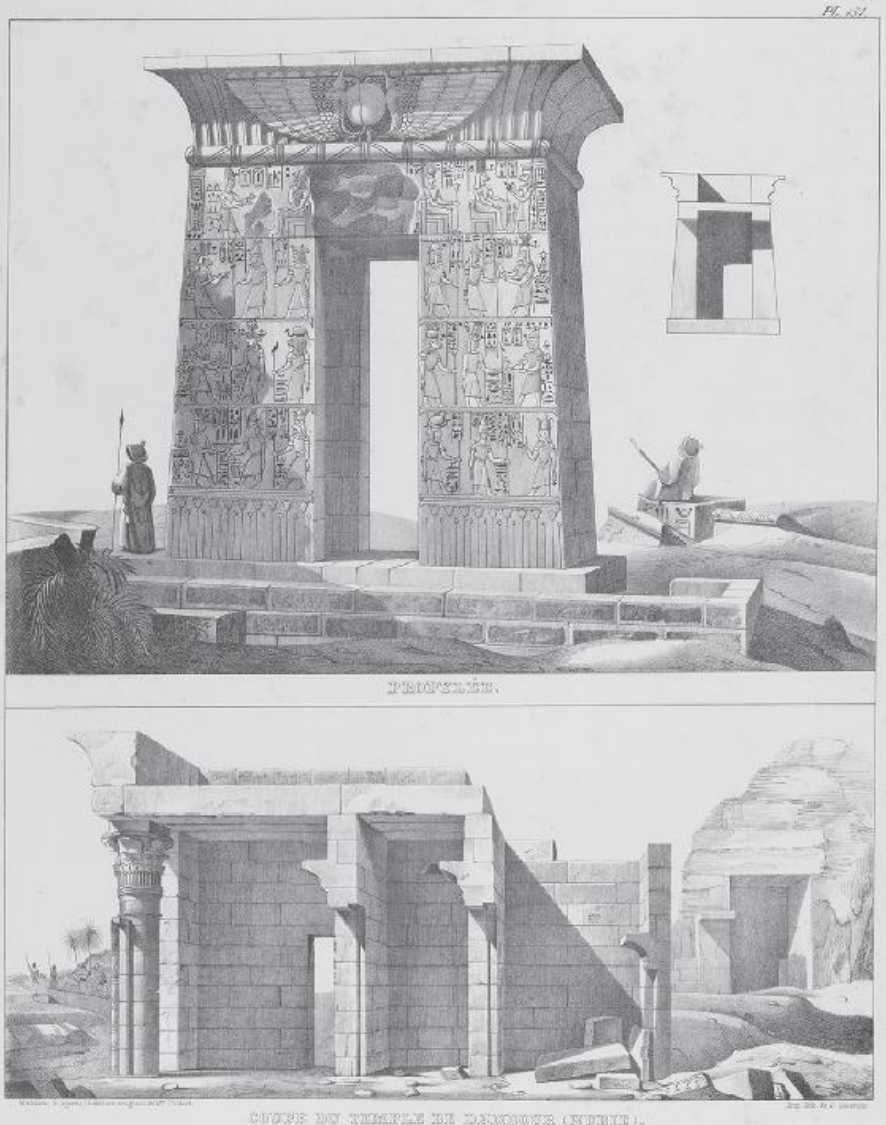


Figure 5.1: Propylon and Section of the Temple of Dandour, Nubia. (Rifaud-1-0001).

Drovetti became Rifaud's protector and employed him as one of his excavators, promising him a third of his archaeological finds. Officially, Drovetti was collecting antiquities on behalf of France. In fact, he also had a personal collection that he principally sold to Charles Felix, King of Piedmont-Sardinia, who in turn exhibited it in the city of Turin. These antiquities were finally deposited with the University of Turin and formed the basis of the collection of the Museo Egizio [Egyptian Museum].

In Egypt, Drovetti and the British Consul Henry Salt (1780–1827) competed to acquire antiquities in order to increase their own

prestige. At Karnak, Salt's and Drovetti's agents began fighting over the antiquities, leading the rivals to agree to partition Egypt between them, with Salt working sites on the west bank of the Nile, and Drovetti those on the east.

In 1817, Rifaud settled in Luxor. He led successful excavations at Karnak and at Thebes (Fig. 5.2) on the east bank of the Nile (Fig. 5.3), discovering more than 60 statues and many antiquities that are now distributed among the major museums of Europe. His success engendered a great deal of jealousy: at that time, no one other than Rifaud had searched so many different sites at Thebes.

in 1822, seeking to disengage himself from Drovetti's protection, Rifaud tried to continue his career in the Fayyum, excavating there for two seasons. He hoped to obtain the same success he had had in Thebes, but to no avail. After considerable effort, spending a lot of his money without any major discovery, and losing a son, Rifaud decided to move to the Delta, at that time a mostly unexplored area. In the area around Damietta, he unearthed numerous monuments and explored Tanis (San el-Hagar) from 25 June to 30 October 1825. Rifaud was credited with the discovery there of more than 20 statues, which are now in the Louvre, Paris, and the Ägyptisches Museum, Berlin. Over the course of 13 years, Rifaud travelled all over Egypt, through the Saïd, through Nubia, as well as in the Western and Eastern Deserts, in Sinai, in Middle Egypt and Lower Egypt, even to the marshy areas hitherto neglected by adventurers, travellers, scholars and archaeologists (Figs 5.4 and 5.5).



Figure 5.2: Sycamore tree from Thebes, Upper Egypt. (Rifaud-6-0002).

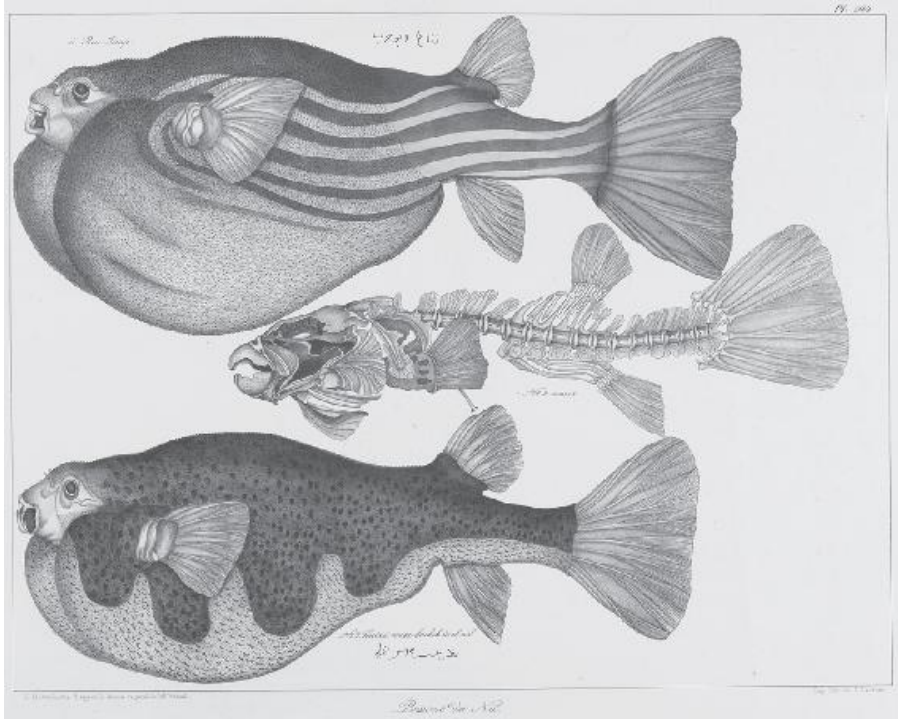


Figure 5.3: Fish from the Nile. (Rifaud-6-0026).

FROM EGYPT BACK TO EUROPE

Eventually, Rifaud left Egypt. First, he stayed in Italy, and then in September 1827, he arrived in Marseilles. On returning to his homeland, he expressed a wish to open an Egyptian museum in Marseilles, which he intended to create and curate. He proposed to devote the museum to Egyptian antiquities, natural history and contemporary daily life, which would be comprised of exhibits from his own collection: ancient and modern artefacts, herbaria, specimens of birds and insects, as well as about 6,000 drawings made on the spot in Egypt. Sadly for Rifaud, the city authorities did not show any interest.

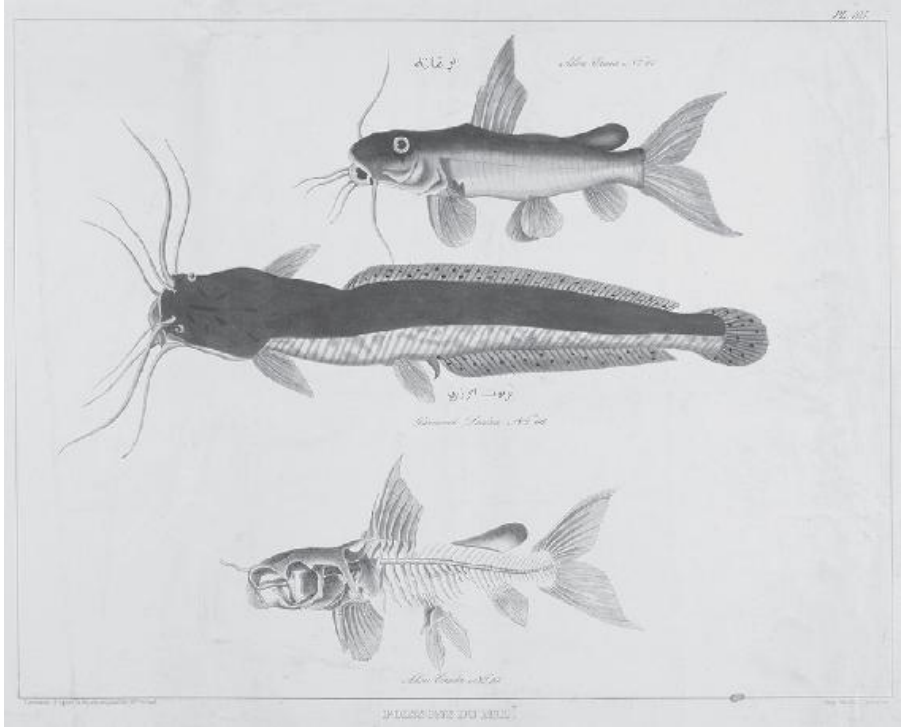


Figure 5.5: Poissons du Nil. (Rifaud-6-0047).

Although he was awarded the *Légion d'Honneur* in 1831, Rifaud ultimately spent his last years leading an unsettled life, travelling all over Europe visiting various cities. He stayed in Paris, Munich, London, St Petersburg, Brussels and finally Geneva. Rifaud devoted the time to presenting his travel accounts and showing his drawings to archaeological and geographical societies. He was eager for scientific recognition and (most importantly) he sought acknowledgment and support from an editor or publisher. Unfortunately, none of his wishes was fulfilled.

Despite the occasional award or congratulations for his work, Rifaud experienced much grief. In Egypt, he felt that Drovetti took the glory of his discoveries for himself. Rifaud even carved his name on some royal statues that he discovered in order to ensure that he would be identified as the real discoverer. In Europe, he became bitter about the scientific audience who failed to appreciate his work as he hoped. In his quest for scientific recognition, Rifaud gathered the reports that geographical societies made about his work. He hoped, somewhat naïvely, that subscribers would be more confident about the scientific quality of his work. Although the reports are glowing in general, they are nonetheless quite critical on many points. Nevertheless, in 1829, Rifaud was able to publish *Rapports faits par les diverses Academies et*

Sociétés savantes de France sur les ouvrages et collections rapportés de l'Égypte et de la Nubie.

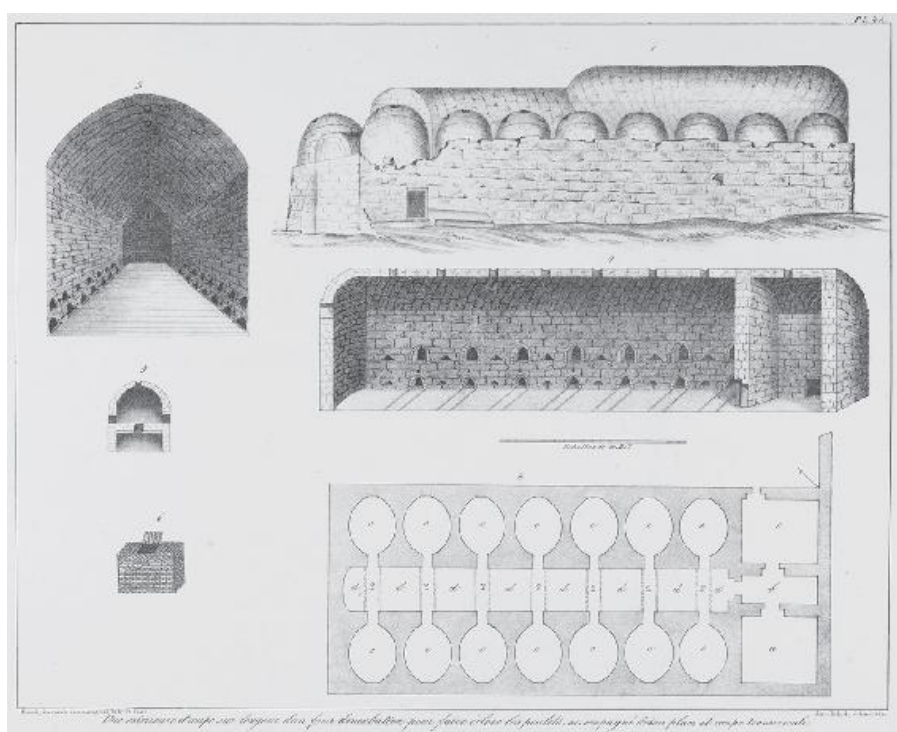
Rifaud also tried to publish a monumental work on his trip to Egypt, using his important documentation and collection of artefacts. He planned to publish his masterpiece, a collection of drawings and memoirs entitled *Voyage en Égypte, en Nubie et lieux circonvoisins, depuis 1805 jusqu'à 1827*, as a supplement to the famous French *Description de l'Égypte* (Fig. 5.6). The revolution of 1830 hindered the project, driving away the majority of subscribers, and delaying the publication because of funding problems. Rifaud spent the remaining 20 years of his life in Europe searching for signatories (financial backers) that could help finance what he called his '*grand ouvrage*'. He never succeeded, and his great work remains unfinished.

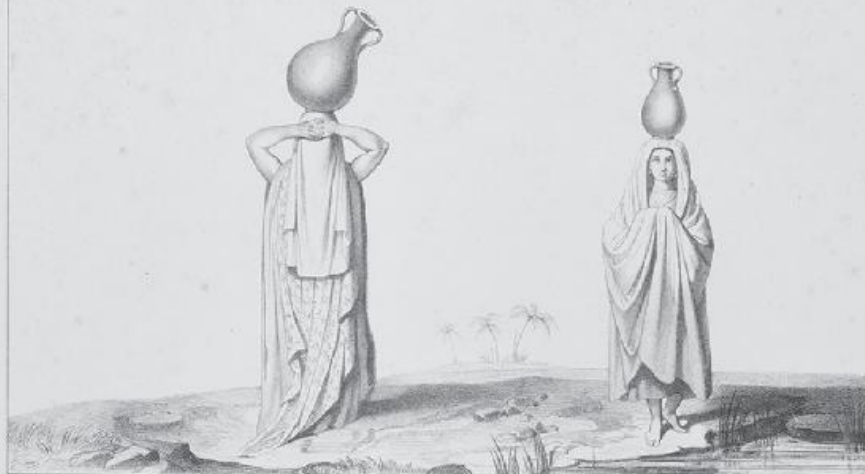
Rifaud's *Voyage en Égypte, en Nubie et lieux circonvoisins, depuis 1805 jusqu'en 1827* was intended to be a set of five octavo volumes and a large folio volume of plates, but only the folio volume of plates appeared (incomplete) in Paris in 1830–34, followed by a later, enlarged edition in Munich. In fact, only about 222 lithographs from his drawings were issued (Figs 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10 and 5.11). Reading his manuscripts, it becomes apparent that this self-taught scholar, who usually expressed himself in 'Provençal', handled written French very clumsily, which may explain why he did not publish the volume of text as originally planned.



Figure 5.6: Frontispiece to J-J Rifaud's *Voyage en Egypte, en Nubie et lieux circonvoisins, depuis 1805 jusqu'en 1827*. (Rifaud-7-0001).

During the last years of his life, Rifaud lived for a time in Belgium. The first report of his being there was in 1846 and came from an unconfirmed source. He had certainly arrived there by the end of August 1849 and stayed until the beginning of 1852, when he left for Switzerland. Rifaud spent the last months of his life in Geneva, where he died on 9 September 1852. His property was sold there on 26 March 1853.





Les deux femmes l'une allant puiser de l'eau au Nil, et l'autre, en revenant.



Engraver d'après le dessin original de M. de la Harpe.

Pl. 32. N. 1. 1. 1.

6 femmes égyptiennes, portant des vases sur la tête.

Figure 5.8: Egyptian women carrying water in jugs (Rifaud-10-0013).

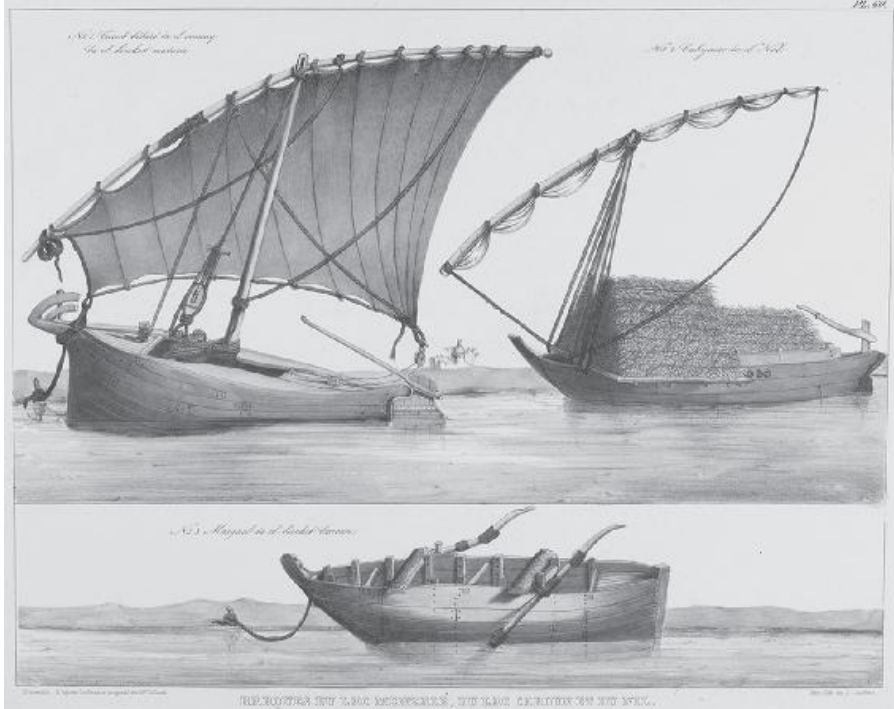


Figure 5.9: Boats on Lake Menzalé, Birket Caroun, and the Nile (Rifaud-10-0023).



Figure 5.10: Nubian men and women dancing (Rifaud-11-0022).

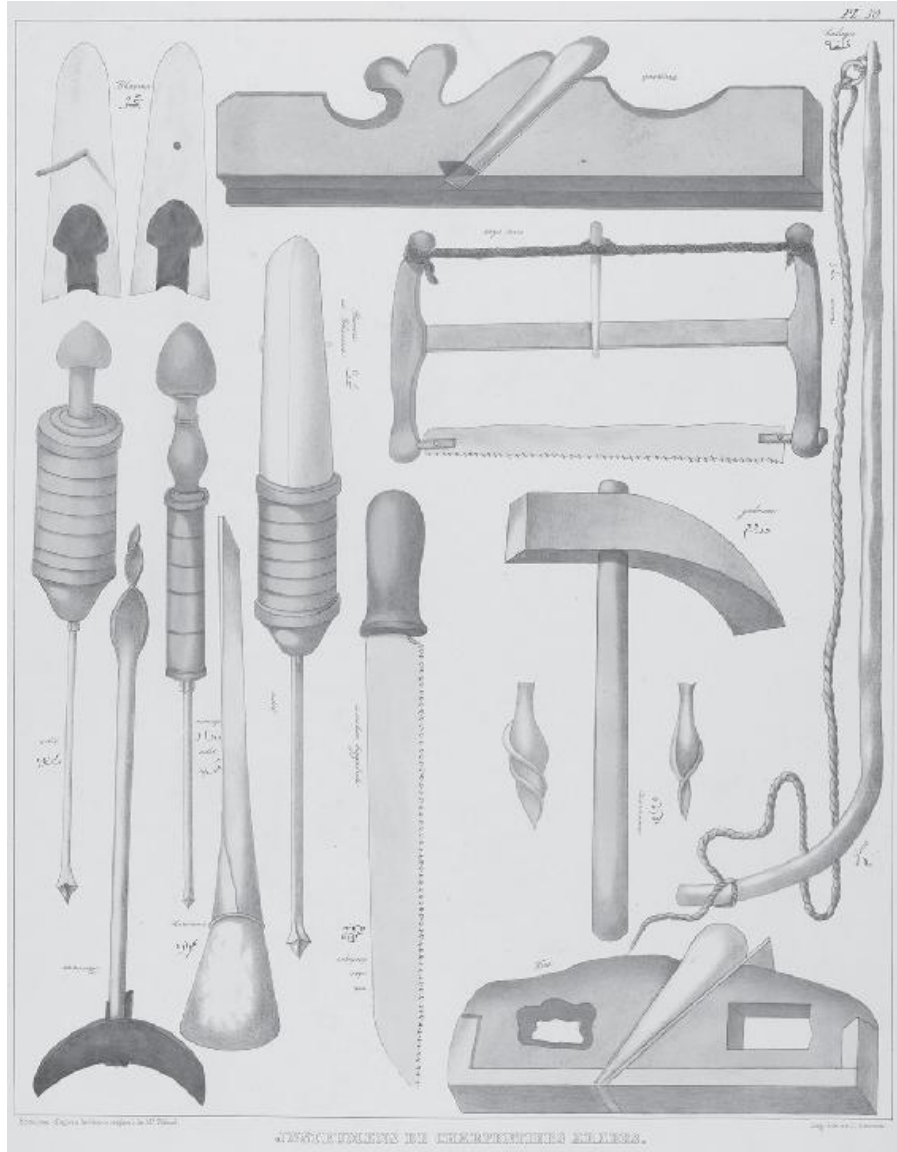


Figure 5.11: Carpenter's tools made and used by Arabs. (Rifaud-11-0037).

RIFAUD'S LEGACY

Until now, Rifaud has been best known as an adventurer competing for antiquities with Giovanni Battista Belzoni (1778–1823), one of Salt's agents. The entry for Rifaud in the most recent edition of *Who Was Who in Egyptology* firmly asserts that 'his work was hasty and unscientific as so often the case during that period, for his only object was the acquisition of portable antiquities'. Sadly, the graphic works that he left behind are generally unappreciated, because he was not

perceived as talented in archaeological drawing and his scientific claims were denied. In short, he is still considered 'a loser'. Nevertheless, for several reasons, his work deserves our attention.

For 13 years, between 1814 and 1827, Jean-Jacques Rifaud travelled in Egypt through the Nile Valley from Alexandria to the second cataract, excavating, and gathering antiquities. He stayed longer than many European travellers since the Middle Ages and longer than most of the scientists of the French Expedition. In Nubia, he spent most of his time exploring between the first and the second cataracts, whereas the members of the French expedition did not travel further than Philae (Aswan). Rifaud also made drawings of monuments that have since 'disappeared' into the lime kilns.

Rifaud was not only interested in antiquities. His attention was drawn to daily life, in the same way as the Englishman Edward Lane (1801–76), who though a contemporary was 15 years younger. Rifaud lived and forged bonds with the villagers and this explains why he was able, for instance, to make drawings of traditional practices, such as the so-called 'female circumcision'.

Despite the fact that Rifaud's contribution to the study of ancient and modern Egypt cannot be considered as a scientific one, it is nevertheless quite significant. His work provides considerable information about Nubian temples, daily life in Nubia, and the way of life of the Bedouin. He was interested in the customs, manners, and language of the Egyptian people, and also the fauna and flora, which he recorded in an exceptionally precise manner. His Egyptian wanderings reflect a penchant for adventure and an intense curiosity for all things. He drew a lot: scenes of everyday life, natural history, antiquities and monuments. He collected a huge amount of information on his own, and finally brought back about 6,000 drawings. And it is the thoroughness of his work that contributes to the richness of his testimony.

JEAN-JACQUES RIFAUD'S LITHOGRAPHS

In 2014, the Royal Museum of Mariemont (Belgium), in partnership with Editions Safran (Belgium), published a book containing the 222 lithographs that Rifaud edited from his drawings in Paris and Munich. Principally based on the four sets of Rifaud's lithographs kept in Belgium (one in the Société archéologique de Nivelles et du Brabant Wallon, one in the Bibliothèque Royale Albert I^{er}, and two in the Association Égyptologique Reine Élisabeth), the publication focuses on the uniqueness of Rifaud's work. The different chapters of the book also rely on the content of Rifaud's papers and archives which are now

in the Department of Manuscripts of the Bibliothèque Publique et Universitaire (BPU) of Geneva. An on-line inventory of his papers is currently being created.

In addition, a great amount of documentation has come from the archives of the late Professeur Jean Yoyotte in the École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris. Yoyotte documented the work of Jean-Jacques Rifaud for decades and with the historian Jean-Jacques Fiechter, he intended to publish a book entitled *Rifaldiana*, which aimed to be a complete study of the published lithographs and unpublished drawings left by Rifaud. Hopefully, a part of their wish will be fulfilled by this new publication, which is intended as an homage to J.-J. Rifaud and to the late Professor Jean Yoyotte and the late Professor Herman De Meulenaere.

Travelling Companions: Mohammed Ashgar, also known as John Bedair (1815–74)

Neil Cooke

The archaeologist Alexander Henry Rhind spent the winters of 1855–56 and 1856–57 in Egypt in the hope of improving his health. After his first visit, instead of writing about the ancient Egyptians and their monuments he published *Egypt its Climate, Character, and resources as a Winter Resort with an Appendix of Meteorological Notes* (1856). One section of his book deals with the benefits of employing Arabic speakers to act as guides and general help while travelling in the country in which he writes, ‘I can speak well of John Bedair, a native of Egypt, but long resident in England, who accompanied me, and of whom I heard at Lee’s, the Passport Agent, Strand’.

Lee & Carter at 440 West Strand, then opposite Charing Cross railway station in London, was the first Passport Agent authorised by the Foreign Office. From their shop, and also by mail order, they sold such items as leather passport covers, maps, Murray’s Handbooks, suitcases and other helpful paraphernalia for travelling, including patent inkstands, foreign writing paper, luggage labels, door fasteners, money bags and washing books which comprised printed laundry instructions in English and other languages. Lee & Carter was also the place where couriers, dragoman and travelling servants could register and advertise their names in the hope of picking up paid work to accompany travellers on their journeys in the Middle East.

But who was John Bedair? His first name does not appear to be Egyptian in origin, yet his surname could be an anglicised version of the Arabic word ‘Bedr’ or ‘Badr’ meaning ‘full moon’. A search through other guidebooks from the time leads to the second edition of Sir John Gardner Wilkinson’s *Modern Egypt and Thebes: being a description of Egypt; including the information required for travellers in that country*

(1858). In the section on servants, Wilkinson added: 'I ought particularly to mention John Bedayr, a Cairene, now living in London (at 440, West Strand), who having been formerly with Mr Burton (Haliburton), and long in England, is well acquainted with English customs, and has had travelling experience in Egypt, Syria, and other countries.'

440 West Strand was of course Lee & Carter's shop, but earlier editions of the book give further addresses where John Bedair could be contacted: 'at Mr Murray's 50 Albemarle Street, also 34 Carnaby Street...'. Mr Murray refers to the book publisher, and Carnaby Street, which runs parallel with Regent Street and Kingly Street, is where Bedair was then living in London, probably with another Egyptian named Hassan, and above Mr Sweetland's baker's shop. Mr Burton is James Burton, who from 1838 reverted to using the family surname of Haliburton. Burton travelled in Egypt between 1822 and 1834 with his secretary-cum-travelling companion, Charles Humphreys, and an Italian servant hired in Naples, named Vincenzo Braico.

Annoyingly, there is no mention in Burton's papers of anyone with the name John Bedair, Bedayr, Bedr or Badr. However, a helpful clue is included in an earlier book by Wilkinson. His *Handbook for Travellers in Egypt: including descriptions of the course of the Nile to the second cataract* (1843) mentions 'another Mahommed [sic], who was a long time with Mr Burton'. A further link between Mohammed and Bedr is then established by a letter dated 25 August 1842 sent by Joseph Bonomi to Robert Hay in which he reports: 'Mohammed [sic] Bedr is come back from the Continent desirous to procure another place as travelling servant and begs me to say if you could recommend him he should be much obliged. He has excellent papers from his last master'.¹ Bonomi and Hay would have known Mohammed and Hassan when they, too, were travelling in Egypt.

Bonomi's facts are confirmed by a ship's passenger list for the Grand Turk stating that on 12 July 1842 John Bedair had arrived in Southampton from Le Havre. Who Bedair's last master might have been is not known, but it could have been Frederick John Monson, 5th Baron Monson of Gatton Park, who travelled with his friend Dr Peter Martin of Reigate. (Lord Monson was once the owner of an Egyptianised medal cabinet commissioned either by Napoleon or Denon and sold by Sotheby's in 2013.) A letter from Bonomi to Hay from 25 May 1840 says 'L[or]d Monson is in Egypt and Stambol [Istanbul] to make drawings he has produced an elegant and very clever work from his drawings in Switzerland he is but just gone and taken Mohammed Mr Haliburton's servant with him'.² Sadly, there is no trace of a diary or journal from either traveller to confirm the dates they were in Egypt or to offer further details about Mohammed

Bedair.

Checking again through Burton's papers, there is nobody by the name of Mohammed Bedr, Badr, Bedair or Bedayr. But there is mention of a man named Mohammed Ashgar, and a pencil sketch of him can be viewed in an album of drawings within the Searight Collection at the Victoria & Albert Museum (Fig. 6.1). Proof that Mohammed Ashgar and John Bedair are one and the same man is provided by a few words written on the sketch, probably added later by Burton: 'Mohammed Ashgar or Bedr 1838. In my service about 12 years 1828 to 1840'. As Wilkinson suggested, Bedair had indeed been with James Burton for a long time.

Revisiting Burton's papers, although a man with the name Mohammed briefly appears in 1823, it is not until July 1830 that the name Mohammed regularly appears, and he is named only once as Mohammed Ashgar in a letter from Burton to Bonomi dated 20 June 1831 that sets out wage payments to various servants – 'For Mohammed Ashgar 60 [piasters] – to be given him for the boy's use'.³ Indeed, Bedair was then a boy aged 16, having been born at Cairo in 1815. The majority of entries in Burton's papers are simple records of Mohammed being at a location with others, such as at Cossier, or being sent on an errand to deliver letters to people in Cairo, or to buy food and general supplies. The entries all date from the period when Burton was encamped in the Eastern Desert with Humphreys, Braico and Dudu, a slave girl from Crete whose real name was Andriana Garofaliki. Andriana had been purchased for Burton from the slave market in Cairo soon after he arrived in Egypt. In the early 1830s, Burton and his companions moved from a comfortable house in Cairo into the Eastern Desert in a bid to live cheaply after his father had stopped paying his bills and Burton was trying to live on money borrowed from George Bellas Greenough, a family friend and mentor.



Figure 6.1: Sketch portrait of Mohammed Ashgar also known as John Bedair attr. to either Joseph Bonomi or Charles Humphreys. Searight Collection, V&A Museum.

Sometime in late 1833, Burton realised that he could no longer remain in Egypt surviving on the clandestine sums of money provided by Greenough. His father had also been pressuring Greenough to write and persuade his son to come home. After two years of receiving such letters, Burton's resolve to do as he pleased crumbled. He returned to

Cairo to settle his affairs and pack up his collection of ancient Egyptian artefacts, together with the drawings and squeezes that had been made, and the zoological specimens that he had not yet sent to England. Unknown to his father and Greenough, Burton had also gathered a menagerie of live animals that he planned to take to England and either sell to the newly formed Royal Zoological Society or to a travelling show.

Among the animals was a five-year-old giraffe given to him by the Pasha, Mohammed Ali. To look after the giraffe and the other animals on their journey to England, Burton invited two of his Egyptian servants from the encampment to accompany him. These were the older Hassan, who had been with Burton since the early 1820s, and the young Mohammed Ashgar. The animals, together with Burton's collections, and accompanied by Humphreys, Braico, Dudu, Hassan and Mohammed, left Cairo for Alexandria in November 1833. Just before they set off, a thief entered Humphreys' tent while he was asleep and carried off his entire wardrobe. It was valued at £20 and no part of it was ever recovered. As the travellers and the animals came within sight of Pompey's Pillar, it began to rain and continued for three days, so that the travellers, the animals and their baggage were all wet through by the time they entered Alexandria.

A letter from Humphreys to Bonomi sent on 13 November 1833 sets the scene:

'We have been in Alexandria a week on our way to Europe!!! Alexandria you will say is still in Egypt but listen to this – Mr Burton has hired a vessel to transport us all, bipeds and quadrupeds to Leghorn – the day fixed for sailing is Monday next (Nov 18th) the vessel is a Neapolitan called *Il Tasso*, Capitan Ruggiero. Our party consists of Mr Burton, Dudu, Vincenzo [Braico], Mohammed, (Hassan), the giraffe, the camel, two gazelles, three monkeys, two wob[r] [sic], three hawks, three owls, a nameless bird, four gerboas [sic], (one hyena) and your most obedient. We shall most probably meet with some delightful stormy weather and if we reach our port in safety it will be in the midst of winter, instead of the summer, as we ought to have done. Two or three cases of plague having occurred here in the lazaretto, will be the cause of having at least 40 days quarantine at Leghorn... We calculate upon being in England about May [1834], which if we escape the seas I think is likely enough, for as soon as Mr B's friends hear of his arrival in Europe, some of them will be paying us a visit and they will carry him off *nolens volens* to the land of fogs and pests, where however I do not think we shall remain long... Will you believe that we all cried upon leaving Cairo... The parting between Vincenzo [Braico] and his woman was really affecting, he shewed more feeling than I thought him capable of and in consequence has risen some degrees in my estimation'.⁴

As with so much of Burton's timekeeping, the *Il Tasso* sailed a week later on 26 November 1833, as recorded in a letter from Robert Hay to Bonomi from 3 December 1833.

Burton's arrangements for transporting the giraffe by ship were most elaborate. After all, it was an extremely valuable animal and he planned to sell it in London for a considerable sum of money and pay off his debt to Greenough.

'It was sick and off its food on a rough sea but quickly recovered on the weather becoming calmer. The middle of the hold was enclosed with planking, and fitted up with cushions to save it in a bad sea, being laid deep with sand and gravel and well covered with straw. I was also prepared with strong canvas for swinging it, which however I seldom used, the animal becoming accustomed to the roll, and [a] very accomplished sailor. It was kept warm, but not too thickly covered, and I have never yet had occasion to clothe it in a complete sheepskin dress which I have for it. Great attention has been paid to its food, and it has not been allowed to have green food except in very small quantities as a treat. I began with this treatment when I first had it, in order to prepare it for the voyage, and it is to this that I principally attribute its good health. I did not allow it any large quantity of water aboard – giving it to drink only every third day as I did the dromedary, its food being split beans and hay. ... It is about five years since it was brought to Qahirah, and it must have been at that time about one year old – it now reaches thirteen feet, and it is a female, and although she can kick, is très amiable.⁵

The voyage from Alexandria to Leghorn [Livorno] took 45 days, suggesting an arrival date in Italy of 10 January 1834. Having settled into the lazaretto for a period of quarantine, to give the giraffe exercise, Burton took to galloping it around the area within the walls, following it riding on the camel. Burton wrote to Greenough on 1 February 1834.

'I remained some months longer in Egypt than I should otherwise have done in expectation of receiving answers to my communication respecting the Zozafel [Egyptian Giraffe] and finally having made all my arrangements, and taken leave of my friends, was resolved on braving the season, contrary to their advice, more particularly as I was flattered with the prospect of a short though perhaps rough passage at this time of year; in this I was (not) disappointed, and have been forty five days at sea during very bad weather. ... In addition to the Zozafel ... Respecting its value, which I have been well considering, I do not see that I ought to part with it for less than eighteen thousand dollars. Having been habituated five years in confinement, and having arrived safely in Europe, in such excellent order, I consider its value as more than trebly increased. The expenses have been very heavy for keep, lodging and attendants [Hassan and Mohammed], and transport from Qahirah to Alexandria, and thence to Europe, and in endeavouring to determine a price from the profit which would accrue to its owner on exhibition, it will of course be considerably augmented by the circumstance of that at Naples being I am told in a weak state, and that at Paris dead'.⁶

Captain Bouchier in his *Narrative of a. passage from Bombay to England*, recorded that, while sightseeing in Leghorn on 21 April 1834, he saw Mr Barton's [sic] giraffe. In early May 1834, John Gardner Wilkinson wrote to Robert Hay, 'Burton is at Leghorn, talks of coming to England

May or June (next?) [1835] his father told me he believed he really was coming – All I know is he told me so in a letter, but then he is in the habit of fixing a time which goes through several years before it is attended to and may be in 1840'.⁷

Burton, his animals and collections, plus Humphreys, Braico, Dudu, Hassan and Mohammed, began the next phase of their journey home aboard the regular steam packet between Leghorn and Marseilles. Sir William Gell, who in 1822 had first put the idea of travelling to Egypt into the mind of Burton, wrote to Wilkinson, 'I should hope ere this Burton would have arrived in England for we saw him in the papers at Marseilles with his Griffons and Salamanders duly advertised. It would be entertaining to walk through France with a museum of monsters and make a fortune by exhibiting at all the places along the road. It would be very entertaining if one was young enough'.⁸

Burton's plan for getting his menagerie to England from Marseille was to continue by boat along the coast to Cette [Sète] and then transfer the animals to a barge on the river Rhône, going first to Lyons then to Chalons, where the giraffe could be walked across country to a canal joining the Seine, and thence taken to Paris and Le Havre before passage by boat across the English Channel to Dover and then walked to London. Burton's party and the animals continued westwards by boat and a few days later arrived at the port of Sète, where they disembarked.

The *Farmer's Weekly* of October 1834 reported, 'Mr Burton, who has been for some time in Arabia, has just returned from that country to France. He has brought with him, and safely landed, a beautiful giraffe, a dromedary, and some gazelles and monkies. The giraffe is understood to be a present to William IV'. This report must have referred to an earlier sighting because the giraffe probably died on 1 September 1834, or was poisoned, as Humphreys firmly believed. At the end of 1834, Peabody's *Parlour Journal* noted that 'the Giraffe presented to Burton, the traveller, by the Pasha, of Egypt, died suddenly at Catta [Cette]. He had but the day previous refused 40,000 francs which had been offered for the animal'. On 4 November 1834, Wilkinson informed Gell, 'I am truly sorry to hear of the decease of Burton's Cameleopard [Giraffe] after all the trouble and expense he has had with it. I wrote to him at Leghorn to recommend him to take half price rather than risk the voyage with it. They are too delicate for northern climes and cannot get proper food. I know not what has become of that which was here at Naples'.⁹

By now, Burton's family and Greenough would have known about the giraffe and the other animals. However, he did not want them to know that the giraffe had died or been poisoned, and reports of it being alive continued to appear in magazines in England. The 26

November 1834 edition of the *Gentleman's Magazine* included the following report and this was repeated in the *Sydney Morning Herald* some three months later:

‘Another explorer of Egypt, who seems to be as equally ardent as all who have preceded him, has arrived in Alexandria; Mr Burton is waiting there for a conveyance to England. He has been eleven years in traversing Egypt in every direction, and more particularly that part of the Eastern Desert which lies between the Nile and the Red Sea. In the course of his explorations he has gathered a mass of material for the improvement of science. His inquiries have been turned alternately to geology, conchology, and zoology. He has brought with him some living animals, among them a young giraffe, and a small but very rare creature resembling a marmot and which in Arabia is called the ovebar. Mr Burton has also employed his scientific investigations upon hieroglyphics. He has been accompanied throughout his long and toilsome travels by Mr Humphries, an able artist, who has copied a great number of hieroglyphics. Some of his drawings have been lithographed at Cairo’.

Instead of taking the planned route northward to Lyons and Chalons, Burton, his collections and menagerie, Humphreys, Braico, Dudu, Hassan and Mohammed travelled westward, reaching Bordeaux on the river Garonne, a short distance from the Bay of Biscay and a route to England. Burton and his travelling companions settled into a hotel at 1 rue de Seze, a few streets back from the river where the animals were found lodgings in the hotel stables. Humphreys wrote to Bonomi from the hotel on Boxing Day 1834.

‘I have interesting adventures to relate to you, the death of the giraffe of course you have heard of which event has quite altered my fate, had it lived we should have been long ago in England, but as it is we have stopt short in this City and it is beyond my power to say with any degree of certainty when we shall quit it. We form here just the same household as in Egypt, that is to say Mr B, Dudu, Vincenzo [Braico], (Hassan), Mohammed, and self and I think I may say that we are all pretty miserable. Mr B is surrounded by a pack of beings who are almost wholly useless but of whom he cannot or will not get rid of, and those beings themselves are unhappy as hope and prospects have been held out to them which they see cannot be realized; ... Your dromedary as well as the other animals that were brought from Egypt with the giraffe are here and nobody knows what to do with them, they are as the horsedealers say eating their heads off, the Camel seems to bear the climate pretty well but does not fatten. We lead the lives of hermits here. I know no one and no one knows me, I have no courage to take up any pursuit and am ... discontented and miserable’.¹⁰

It was while staying at the hotel between January and March 1835 that something dreadful happened. Burton recounted the event in a letter to Hay written after they had all arrived in England:

‘The poor fellow Mohammed had his right arm horribly lacerated by one of the animals. Amputation was at first decided upon by the surgeons but I persuaded them to let nature try her powers to preserve the limb. Every artery, vein and

tendon – except that of the little finger – were torn apart and the joint of the wrist laid open so that the hand hung by the fleshy part towards the little finger only. The goodwill of nature and the good blood of the Arab succeeded and I preserved the tombstone of an arm although without the use. This accident beside loading me with very heavy accounts for surgeons and apothecaries – for the keep of his bed and room four or five months – has left a cripple on my hands for support and brought me to the end of another year'.¹¹

The animal in question was the Hyena ('Hyena Aegyptiacus – the same I fancy as the Syrian')¹² and it was shot dead.

Although short of money, Burton would not seek help from his family or Greenough. Unknown to Burton, Humphreys wrote to Bonomi on 7 April 1835, saying 'We shall all be very shortly moving homewards and are now only waiting until the French Government make payment respecting the ... Camel, gazelles, monkeys etc. which they I believe are going to take. ... We are quite well but as I have before told you very low in purse and all this is owing to the Giraffe, who swallowed up such an enormous sum of money without any profit'.¹³ Bonomi sent a £10 note by return post.

To pay for the cost of the hotel and stabling, the surgeons and apothecaries treating Mohammed and the expense of the journey home, Burton was obliged to sell his remaining menagerie. At the end of April 1835, Burton made contact with Monsieur Guestier, depute de la Gironde, who brokered a deal with the Jardin des Plantes, in Paris, represented by M. Isidore Geoffrey St Hilaire. The menagerie moved to Paris in October and the animals were installed in their new quarters on 3 November.

It was now almost two years since Burton, Humphreys, Braico, Dudu, Hassan and Mohammed had sailed from Alexandria. Burton, his travelling companions and his collections now set off for England. Instead of going to England, Vincenzo Braico was given money to pay for his journey home to Naples. On 8 December 1835, Hay sent a letter to Edward W. Lane saying 'I hear confidently from Greenough that Burton is confidently expected home at Xmas. What a pleasure it will be to see him again. I can hardly believe it'.¹⁴ It being Christmas Eve, Greenough, as was his habit, went from London to visit Decimus Burton in his house at Tunbridge Wells, and from there the two men travelled to St Leonards-on-Sea to join the annual family gathering. On arrival, they found the well-travelled James Burton happily in residence at his parent's house.

Burton, Humphreys, Dudu, Hassan and Mohammed had arrived at the port of Dover a few days before what turned out to be the coldest Christmas and New Year for many years. As proof against the icy cold wind, they had probably swapped their Egyptian clothes for European dress in order to stay warm. While Burton had his friends and family to look after him at the family home in St Leonards-on-Sea (and he

would soon be in London with ‘as many Egyptians as my friend Greenough can collect together’),¹⁵ nobody bothered to record where Humphreys, Dudu, Hassan and Mohammed stayed or what they did with their time, or how they were fed. After a few weeks, Burton and Dudu moved into rooms at 49 Jermyn Street in London, which they shared with Humphreys. Here, Burton and Dudu lived frugally on an allowance from his father, while Humphreys, who was yet to be paid the salary he was due for the time he had spent in Egypt, Italy and France, was given a job by Greenough as Secretary to the newly founded Geological Society. Hassan and Mohammed must have been given an allowance by the Burton family, or by Greenough, and rented rooms for themselves above the baker’s shop in Carnaby Street, London, where at least it was warm most of the day.

Burton’s life took a turn for the worse when, on 6 June 1839, his friend Humphreys died of consumption after a few days in bed being nursed by Dudu. Burton purchased a plot at Kensal Green Cemetery and Humphreys was buried there a few days later, the grave marked by an Egyptianised headstone. Burton and Dudu were the only mourners and there is no record of Hassan or Mohammed or any other of their traveller friends being there. Dudu was unable to console Burton over the death of his friend of 27 years, and besides, he was also being worried by Greenough over the repayment of the money that had kept him in Egypt long after his father had stopped paying his bills. Having lost his giraffe, and having used money from the sale of the remainder of his menagerie to pay his bills in Bordeaux and the cost of travel to Dover, and now with the unexpected expense of a funeral, Burton was forced to sell his collection of ancient Egyptian artefacts. The sale, at Sotheby’s, took place over three days from 25 July 1836 and raised almost £1,000. Within a week the auction house declared they were bankrupt and Burton lost his money.

In desperate need Burton wrote to Hay asking to increase his existing loan from £310 to £500 and to include a sum of £40 that Humphreys had borrowed two years before:

‘But such a loan will be the means of relieving me from the embarrassments which the yet unsettled condition of our Estate or the cold decisions of my co-Executors have led me into, in conjunction with the sum I have been obliged to find for the purpose of discharging my servant Hasan [sic], whose services of nineteen years have merited some reward and at the same time by reason of the funeral and other expenses and several of the debts of poor Humphreys, which I have paid. This loan will also enable me to send off Mohammed, who although not of my house for several months, still continues a heavy expense for me. The medical attendance funeral and debts above have cost me £150. Hassan’s wages and present about £130 and Mohammed will require not less than £80’.¹⁶

Shortly after Humphrey’s death, and the death of his own parents,

Burton and Dudu moved to Edinburgh where he reverted to using his original family surname of Haliburton. Burton spent his time carrying out research and meeting distant relatives in order to create a family tree that tried to prove a relationship to the author Sir Walter Scott, whose mother had been a Haliburton. He was perhaps doing this in the hope of being considered for a share of Scott's fortune and estates when he died. About this time, and to the dismay of his entire family, Burton may have married Dudu.

Hassan probably used the money he received from Burton to return to Egypt because he is not mentioned in letters after 1840. He may be the Hassan Botche who in 1849 accompanied Wilkinson during one of his later visits to Egypt. Mohammed Ashgar, being younger than Hassan, chose to remain in England. With his better command of English, Mohammed decided to make a career as a courier or dragoman to accompany wealthy travellers on their journeys to Europe and the Middle East.

Being a courier was a responsible job and *Brockedon's Roadbook to Naples* explains what was to be expected.

'Travellers not familiar with foreign languages, who have ladies, a carriage, and luggage, require a servant, especially on hurried journeys. ... It is notorious that English servants taken for the first time to the Continent, and ignorant of every language but their own, are worse than useless – they are an encumbrance. The traveller who requires a servant at any rate had better take a foreign one ... A courier, however, though an expensive luxury, is one which conduces much to the ease and pleasure of travelling, and few who can afford one will forego the advantage of his services. He relieves his master from much fatigue of body and perplexity of mind, in unraveling the difficulties of long bills and foreign moneys, sparing his temper the trials it is likely to endure from disputes with innkeepers, postmasters, and the like. If clever and experienced, and disposed to consult the comfort of his employer, he is a most useful person. His duties consist in preceding the carriage at each stage, to secure relays of post-horses on those routes where horses are scarce, or where the number of travellers renders it difficult to procure them. This, however, is seldom necessary, except where the travelling party is very large, occupying several carriages, and requiring 6 or 8 horses, which may take an hour or two to collect at a post-house, and must often be brought in from the fields. He must make arrangements for his employer's reception at inns where he intends to pass the night; must secure comfortable rooms, clean and well-aired beds, and order meals to be prepared, fires to be lighted, taking care that his master is called in proper time, and that the post-horses are ordered at the right hour. He ought to have a thorough knowledge of everything that relates to the care of a carriage; he should examine it at the end of each day's journey to ascertain whether it requires any repairs, which should be executed before setting out; and it is his fault if any accident occur en route from neglect of such precautions. He should superintend the packing and unpacking of the luggage, should know the number of parcels, &c, and be on his guard against leaving anything behind. It falls to the courier to pay innkeepers, postmasters, and post-boys, and he ought to take care that his master is not overcharged. Besides this, he performs all the services of waiting and attendance, cleaning

and brushing clothes, &c. He ought to write as well as speak the language of the countries he is about to visit, so as to be able to communicate by letter with innkeepers, when it is necessary to bespeak accommodation beforehand; and he is not perfectly accomplished unless he have a smattering of the art of cookery’.

To help regulate the quality of couriers and provide travellers with certainty about whom they were employing, it was not long before The Society of Couriers and Travelling Servants of Different Nations was formed, with premises at 12 Bury Street, St James’s, under the direction of Mr Kleinmann, its Secretary. The Society, ‘who profess to admit into their body, and to recommend to travellers, only such as are of unexceptionable character’, also provided further guidance to a potential employer:

‘It is manifest from the duties of a courier that he has the temptation and opportunity of being dishonest; but so has every servant in whom confidence is placed, and to whom property is intrusted; but it is as repugnant to our feelings, as it is at variance with our experience, to condemn couriers or any other class. There are honest and faithful couriers, who not only protect their employers from the imposition of others, but vigilantly and indefatigably perform their duty in other respects. For the sake of servant and master we advise travellers to settle their courier’s accounts regularly and at short intervals, and to examine minutely the book of expenses. We have no hesitation in saying that, especially to a family, a good courier is invaluable in saving time, trouble, money, and loss of temper to his master.

‘It would greatly improve the relations in which traveller, innkeeper, and courier mutually stand to one another, if the practice were introduced of the master (traveller) paying for his courier as he does for any other servant. At present, though the courier nominally provides for himself at an inn, his board and lodging in reality form an addition to the master’s bill. ... The usual wages of a courier while travelling are from £8 to £10 a month, if he be engaged for less than 2 months, he will probably expect £12; if his services be retained while his master is stationary in a place, he ought not to expect more than £6 supposing his engagement to last for ten or twelve months’.

Exactly when Mohammed Ashgar changed his name is not known, but John Bedair is recorded on a ship’s passenger list of 12 July 1842, when he arrives in Southampton from Le Havre aboard the *Grand Turk*. That his new career was proving to be successful is confirmed in a letter to Hay dated 25 August 1842 in which Bonomi writes: ‘Mohammed Bedr is come back from the Continent desirous to procure another place as travelling servant and begs me to say if you could recommend him he should be much obliged. He has excellent papers from his last master’.¹⁷ A year later and Wilkinson makes his first reference to Mohammed in his *Modern Egypt and Thebes*, published in 1843. In addition, Wilkinson recommends the Neapolitan Vincenzo Braico as ‘best, both for the Continent as well as the East’. Hay met

Vincenzo on the river Nile in February 1844, so clearly he too was benefiting from the good publicity. Vincenzo found his clients at 'Cotterell's the bankers in Naples' where travellers would go to read the English and foreign newspapers. On 17 August 1843, a ship's passenger list for the *Columbine* records John Bedair as having arrived in London from Rotterdam, presumably on yet another return journey.

The Times of Thursday 8 February 1844 reported that the P&O steamship *Oriental* from India left Alexandria on 24 January 1844 for Malta and England with 90 passengers bound for Southampton. The passenger list included John Bedair, servant of the late Mr R. Bateson. Bateson's journey with his servant was recorded by John Lowthian, a farmer from near Carlisle, in *A Narrative of a recent visit to Jerusalem and several parts of Palestine, in 1843-44* (1847). Although Bedair is not mentioned by name, it is always clear who is being referred to: 'I will here observe, that my greatest anxiety in leaving England was, lest I should not meet with any person going to Syria with whose company I should be favoured in my journey; accordingly, when I got on board at Southampton, I enquired if there was any one among the passengers going to Syria, and was informed that there was one gentleman, Mr Bateson, MP for Londonderry, who, with his servant, intended visiting that country'. Bateson's plan was to visit Mount Lebanon, Baalbec, Damascus, Palmyra and other places including Beirut and Jerusalem.

Although Bateson took along Bedair as a servant, in Malta he engaged another named Nicalo or Nicolo. Arriving at Alexandria, Lowthian observed with a degree of humour, 'My friend, Mr Bateson, having a great deal of luggage, called for a camel, and, in a moment, one was on its knees before us to receive its load: and certainly a most tremendous load his owner put upon it: but, after giving a groan or two, it rose up with great ease and moved off'.

Now settled into a hotel, a few days later, Lowthian watched as Bateson and Bedair set off to look at the monuments:

'This morning I saw from my room window, carts drawn by mules; these were the first carts I had as yet seen; but camels and donkeys are in abundance, I may say at a discount: no fewer than twenty donkeys, bridled and saddled, were at one time waiting for hire at the hotel door. The moment a person puts his head out of the hotel, a host of the donkey drivers gather about him, so that he well nigh runs the risk of having his clothes torn off, by the pressing and pulling solicitations of his unceremonious claimants for patronage. Mr Bateson and his servant had this day a capital struggle to make with these Arab boys; it lasted for some minutes. However, they got mounted at last, and after laying about them with their whips, they soon escaped the crowd, and away flew the donkeys with two Arab boys scampering at their heels'.

After a few days in Alexandria, Bateson, Bedair and Nicalo set off for Beirut: 'We sailed across the seven mouths of the Nile. Mr Bateson

amused himself during the day in shooting at the sea birds and porpoises with his double-barrelled gun. He wounded one porpoise severely, which instantly dived under water, and we saw it no more’.

Within days they reach Beirut and cast anchor. Having enjoyed breakfast on board, Bateson was taken ashore in a small boat. This had to be towed by another and was accompanied by a *guardiana* to ensure quarantine was maintained. Since nobody local was allowed to touch either passengers or luggage, Bedair and Nicalo transferred it to shore using yet another boat. Rocks on the shoreline made landing difficult and the two servants jumped into the sea and carried Bateson and the luggage above their heads to keep them dry. Bateson and his servants took up residence on the first floor of a nearby house set in a mulberry garden on the outskirts of the city ready to spend seven days in quarantine.

Having completed the quarantine period, Bateson, Bedair and Nicalo visited Beirut:

‘We entered the town through a large gateway, at either side of which stood two sentinels with bayonets fixed, and then passed through many a filthy narrow street, to the house of Mr Heald; who had kindly undertaken to procure us lodgings at an Italian Hotel, about half a mile from the town. This place being quite full, we got lodgings at a house about two or three hundred yards distant: but when Mr Bateson saw the place, he did not like it, and gave orders to have his luggage taken back to the town to another hotel: and the next day he set off to visit the mountains of Lebanon; thence to Baalbec, Damascus, Palmyra, (the) Lake of Tiberias, Mount Carmel, Acre, Samaria, and so on to Jerusalem’.

Bateson, Bedair and Nicalo arrived in Jerusalem on Sunday 17 December 1843. The next day, Lowthian called on them, only to find Bateson was out visiting Mr Young the English Consul. Lowthian left his card hoping to see his friend later that day. That evening Nicalo called on Lowthian to inform him that ‘Mr Bateson was exceedingly ill, and not likely to live till morning’.

Bateson died of typhoid on Christmas Eve. Lowthian wrote, ‘And here one was taken and the other left – a young man in the prime of life [aged 27] was snatched away as in a moment, and an old man of more than sixty left to lament his loss’. Later that evening, Lowthian visited Bedair and Nicalo to find the latter in bed with the same sickness, caused he noted by ‘very long journeys in wet weather, and sleeping in wet clothes and bedding’. Nicalo clearly recovered as according to Robert Williams in his *A narrative of Journeys in the Land of Israel* (1849) Lowthian, on his second journey to the region, he met him again in Beirut in November 1847.

The funeral took place during the afternoon of Christmas Day. Bedair was there and stated it was his belief that ‘when Sir Robert and

Lady Bateson, the parents of the deceased, should hear of the sad event, they would have the body taken up and brought to England'. The parents decided to leave their son in Jerusalem, the first person to be interred in the Protestant cemetery, and his elegant marble sarcophagus survives to this day. That Mr Bateson was travelling with missionaries and buried in the Protestant cemetery at Jerusalem may explain why in 1860 Bedair declared he was a Protestant when seeking to become naturalised as a British subject.

Soon after his return to London, on 30 July 1844, John Bedair married Martha Ford at St George's Church, Hanover Square. The church records describe John's father, Selim Bedair, as a potter working in Cairo. Those present on the day, in addition to George Kemp the Curate, included as witnesses, John X (his handwriting is unreadable) and Susan Goodchild (who marked with an X). Also at the gathering were Peter Chapman and Mary Jane Stansfield, who were married before them, John Richardson and Rebecca Sophia Jones and James Felton and Martha Elizabeth Wood, who were married after them on the same day.

St George's Church was probably chosen because it was close to Bedair's home in Carnaby Street, although the church record gives their address as Princes Street, just off Hanover Square. They may have been staying or working at the Brunswick Hotel situated there. Martha came from Bermondsey in London, and her father Joseph Ford was a woolstapler. The 1851 Census gives her age as 31, suggesting that she was born in 1820. How John and Martha met is not known, but given that he was away for several months at a time and that he had returned from the Middle East earlier in the year, the couple may only just have met. John also had to fit the wedding in between jobs because, on 17 August 1845, a ship's passenger lists record him as having arrived home from Rotterdam, and on 24 October 1845, he is recorded as arriving at Brighton from Dieppe on the *Menai*. These must have been short trips to parts of Europe.

From 1847 to 1848, John and Martha lived at 11 Portsdown Terrace, Kilburn Gate, in north London, where their first child was born in 1847, a daughter Frances (Fanny) Catherine Martha (or Maude) Bedair. At this address, Bedair is described as a China and Glass dealer. Perhaps he was hoping to capitalise on some of the skills he had learned from his father. From there, the family moved to 16 Jamaica Road, Bermondsey, on the south side of the Thames, where a second daughter was born in 1848. Christened Jane Fatima Bedair, she died three months later. In 1850, another child, a boy named John Bedair was born. The 31 July 1850 passenger lists state that 'John Bedair, Courier born in Egypt arrived in London from Ostend on the Sir Bankes' Edward', which suggests Bedair was constantly travelling

and planned his journeys around the conception and birth of his children.

It is not clear how often John Bedair accompanied travellers to Egypt or other countries in the Middle East and there may be gaps when he may simply have been acting as a courier delivering business letters to different towns and cities in Europe. In 1851, when the annual Census was compiled, John Bedair was not present, which suggests he was again away from home. Also at the address on census day were Mary Ann Williams, aged 15, and Mary Pearson, aged 49, who may have been lodging there or who were servants.

In November 1852, John Bedair went off to Egypt once again as dragoman to the Americans Joseph P. Thompson, Professor Thomas C. Upham DD of Bowdoin College and Benjamin S. Walcott and his wife of New York Mills. Bedair's name is included in Walcott's passport, stating that he was accompanying him from London to Italy as a courier and giving his age as 37, indicating he was born in 1815. Walcott's passport was amended on reaching Cairo in March 1853 to include travel in Egypt, and via Suez across Sinai to Jerusalem, and from there into Syria.

The journey is recorded by Joseph P. Thompson in *Photographic Views of Egypt, Past and Present* (1854). The descriptions of encounters between the American travellers and local Egyptians through the intermediary of their dragoman Bedair make for interesting reading, and demonstrate the knowledge he had gained of the ways and ideas of peoples from different countries. On arrival in Alexandria, Thompson, who like his companions was a missionary, showed concern for how Bedair would be received in his native land: 'I asked the guide who showed us about the City [of Alexandria], why our dragoman, who has renounced Mohammedanism for Christianity, had not had his head taken off; his reply was, "The governor does not know, and nobody knows", meaning nobody will tell. Perhaps a silent work of grace might go forward here, as in Tuscany, even in face of the penalty of death'.

Bedair soon began to carry out the tasks he had been employed for. By 12 January 1853, he had engaged a boat and was checking the beds, tables, chairs, kitchen utensils and table furniture provided by its owner. Next, Thompson and Bedair held interviews to engage a cook before heading off to the market to lay in general stores and delicacies to feed six people for a six-week voyage: 'Knowing the adhesive property of money in an Arab's fingers, we did not dare to trust him [the cook] to make the purchases alone'. Among the provisions they bought were salt, flour, sugar, fresh and dried fruits, sauces, pickles, preserves, oil, vinegar, ham, tongues and wine. Although tea could be obtained, it was suggested this should be

bought in Malta, where it was cheaper, during the voyage to Egypt. Thompson noted:

‘Much of the trade of Alexandria is in the hands of French and Italian merchants – there are few English, – and in dealing with these there was nothing novel. But for many articles it was necessary to go to the Egyptian bazaar, a quarter consisting of narrow and dirty streets lined on both sides with little stalls, and of one or two squares where goods are displayed in the open air by scores of natives sitting upon stones or divans, pipe in hand. It had rained hard in the morning, as is usual at Alexandria at this season, and the mud was of the consistency of Broadway mud without the relief of a sidewalk’.

The items purchased in the greatest quantities were oranges at US¢50 the hundred, and firewood, with Thompson buying 150 lb in weight also at a cost of US¢50.

Items such as mutton, fowls, milk, eggs, butter and vegetables were purchased daily from villages along the river, although Thompson had reservations about hygiene:

‘The best quality of butter in Egypt, as in Italy, is made without salt; this can be got at intervals along the Nile. A second quality for cooking, is made by melting down all sorts of butter to the consistency of lard or of carriage grease. I went to the stall of a venerable Arab who sat cross-legged among jars of butter and oil, and empty jars for the accommodation of customers. His butter was the best in market, and – to assure me of its good quality, he took up a wooden ladle filled with the grease, bit off a large mouthful, smacked his lips, and dipped the ladle in again to fill my jar. Each time the ladle came out, his great greasy fingers that had just been in oil, were used to scrape it clean, and when the scales were emptied he scooped up what remained with his finger and wiped them upon my jar, and then sucked them in his mouth. The termination of this disgusting process so moved my risibles that he observed it, laughed also, and repeated the motion. I told him that was not American; to which he replied through the dragoman, that an Egyptian eats with his whole heart, and does not look at everything as if he was afraid to put it in his mouth!’

Visits with Bedair to local shops were a great fascination for Thompson:

‘A dealer in comfortables afforded a good specimen of oriental trading as it was before the innovations of the Franks. He was a man of fifty, in good condition, wore a handsome turban, a long white jacket with blue bands, gathered in ample folds about his waist, white loose trousers, leggings, sandals, and a long flowing scarf. His shop, like the rest, was about eight feet square; he sat in one corner by the door, cross-legged upon a mat, smoking a long pipe, the bowl of which rested in a pan of ashes, and sipping a tiny cup of jet black coffee, without sugar or milk, while a little tin pot of the same beverage was steaming at his side. When we stopped at his door, or rather in front of the shop, for the whole front was open to the street, he very deliberately handed his pipe and cup to his servant who stood behind him, then rose and handed us the article for which we inquired. His entire stock amounted to three

comforters, three baskets of cotton, and half a dozen small articles of bedding. After we had made our examination and comments, he resumed his deliberate attitude as if quite indifferent to the result. ... The offer of a sovereign in payment of our purchase, led to a general consultation among the bystanders. It was passed from hand to hand, stared over gravely, and its value computed in piasters, when lo, it proved that the whole assembled company could not change the piece, and I was obliged to borrow silver of the dragoman. The money of all countries is current in Egypt; Spanish doubloons, English sovereigns, French Napoleons, dollars Spanish, Austrian, American, Neapolitan, besides the money of Constantinople, the currency of the country being exceedingly ill-regulated. It is a great perplexity to a stranger to reduce all these to their valuation in piasters (five cent pieces), and almost equally so to small shopkeepers, the limited extent of whose resources is illustrated by the fact that I seldom found one who was able to change a sovereign'.

Having made their purchases, Thompson, Bedair, the dragoman and the cook returned to the boat moored on the banks of the Mahmooddeeh Canal:

‘And a most imposing cavalcade it was. Two long, low, narrow wagons, with wheels about eighteen inches in diameter, driven by swarthy men in long frocks and red caps, carried the major part of the stores. These were preceded by a Janissary, or more properly a Cawass, mounted on a donkey; he was dressed in a blue frock reaching to his knees, loose trousers gathered about his calves, neat leggings and sandals, and a red cap with a black tassel; a long, crooked sword dangled at his side; he was a fine looking man, and regarded the whole cavalcade with a most complacent air. Next followed the writer on a donkey, in the capacity of Commissary-General; then the two wagons, one of them mounted by a stout Nubian in smock and turban, who was an officer of the customs, and without whom we could not pass the gate, and flanked by sundry boys and men, carrying parcels, or testifying their interest in the movement; and the rear was brought up by our dragoman and the culinary professor, both mounted on donkeys and wearing red caps. The donkey boys ran after us, and as we approached the canal, we put their speed to the test, so as to bring up in proper style before the boat’.

Thompson's narrative also indicates the wide range of subjects that might require translation from English into Arabic and shows how much Bedair was expected to be familiar with as in this account of a visit to a local Bey,

‘One of our party, being the manufacturer of the celebrated ‘New York Mills’ shirting, was able to give him full information respecting the cotton manufactures of America. The Bey was amazed at the quantity of cotton raised in the United States, and wished to know how this was ascertained. The system of newspapers, mails, markets, etc. was then explained, which increased his astonishment. He was gratified to hear that in the United States any person could become as great a proprietor as the Pasha of Egypt’.

On another occasion, he recalls:

‘As we had come ashore without either the interpreter or an Arabic

vocabulary, a sad messakoom (good evening) pretty much exhausted our conversational resources. ... I now began to experiment with the language of signs. Our steersman, who was with us, understood the English word water; so pointing toward the west, I said, "America – water;" then made the motion of steamboat paddles, which they recognized at once from having seen the steamboats of the Pasha on the river, – then brought together the palms of my hands, according to their mode of counting ten, which, twice repeated, and one hand added, made twenty five "iydm" (days). They understood perfectly that America was twenty-five days' sail by steamboat, but recollecting the slow rate of their river steamers, I made the time forty-five days, to give them a better idea of the distance. ... As the interview promised to be one of much interest, we despatched a messenger to the boat for the dragoman. This was accomplished by pointing to the boat and saying, "Bedair", then making the sign of conversation with the sheik, and adding, "Arabee-Ingles – Ingles-Arabee". One of the sailors who had strolled up took the hint, and did the errand...

A new idea now struck me. With the point of my stick, ... I traced a rude outline map of Africa, Europe, and America; then pointing to the Nile, I showed them Msr (Egypt), from the Mizraim of Scripture, and Arabia beyond, and then Cairo, also called Mizr, El Manderieh [Mandura] (Alexandria), Stamboul (Constantinople), Europa, and following the Mediterranean and repeating the word water, I came to Ingles (England), and then slowly tracing the Atlantic, saying "water, water," and, imitating a steamboat, I carried them to New York. ... I next explained the manner of electing our President, and all our principal men. ... When it was explained to the sheik that in the United States the people vote the taxes, and the people fight when war is necessary, and that the President cannot seize any man's property or person, for any purpose whatever, both he and the soldier expressed their great admiration of such a government, and to my surprise the sheik inquired with some earnestness, whether we would permit a Mussulman to live in our country? I had noticed quite a disposition in one or two of our crew to attach themselves to our service for life, and to go back with us to America; but I was astonished at a proposal to emigrate from a staid Mussulman, the head man of a village'.

It is not known when Bedair returned home from his journey with Walcott, but he must have left England again sometime late in 1853 because the passenger lists record him as arriving in Southampton from Malta aboard the *Himalaya* on 3 May 1854. His timing could not have been better, for Martha was delivered of their fifth child in June who was christened with the name Martha Elizabeth Bedair. Also, while he was away, on 10 April 1853, his daughter Frances Catherine Martha Bedair, aged six, was admitted to St Paul's School, Westminster and on 8 October 1855, his son John Bedair, aged six, was admitted to the same school. Clearly, Bedair could see the value of an education.

In 1855, Bedair was off again to Egypt, this time with Alexander Henry Rhind. Given that Rhind was going there for health reasons, it is likely that the journey was undertaken in the winter of 1855 and spring of 1856. In his book, Rhind gives a good explanation of why it

was necessary to be accompanied on such a journey by someone who could speak Arabic and had experience in looking after travellers.

‘On this account, as well as from the fact, that a language so little within the pale of modern civilisation as Arabic, is almost certain to be, in the fullest sense of the term, an unknown tongue to every visitor on his first arrival, and is, moreover, so extremely difficult of acquisition, that reasonable application during one winter will make but small progress even for those who persevere in the attempt – for these reasons, the services of properly qualified people are of material importance. ... Most of the men who follow this line of life are – so constantly in the habit of doing so, that they are quite familiar with the wants of those who are likely to engage them, and are accustomed to act accordingly. They are likewise provided, from previous occasions, with various fittings, furnishings, or such like; and, in short, lay themselves out for this sort of business, as would the master of a hotel with reference to his. ... From this it will be perceived that the wants of travellers can be so well supplied on the spot, in consequence of the tolerably extensive demand, that elaborate preparations before arriving in the country are now quite uncalled for; and one may land at Alexandria with no more baggage, and with no more extensive equipment, than he would bring on shore at Calais, without experiencing the slightest inconvenience’.

With glowing references from his employers, Bedair went regularly to Egypt escorting wealthy travellers. However, matters were changing with regard to the issue of passports and the ease by which he could enter England. With an English wife and four living children in London, he thought it sensible to become naturalised as a British subject and applied under oath to the Secretary of State for the Home Department. Bedair explained he was aged 45, born in Cairo in 1815, had lived in England for 25 years except at intervals when he was outside England being employed as a courier, and was now living at 40 Lower Sloane Street, Chelsea, with his English wife and four children, and intended, when not working as a courier, to reside in the United Kingdom. In support, he attached four sworn statements. They came from Catherine Backhouse, wife of the late Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, John Lee, of Lee & Carter Passport Agents, Ann Ford from Jamaica Road, Bermondsey, and Charles Ford, the Parish Clerk to St Paul’s Church, Knightsbridge. Ann and Charles may have been Martha’s sister and brother. His application was speedily approved, and a certificate issued to him on 10 July 1860.¹⁸

The 1861 Census also confirms that John Bedair was born in Cairo, Egypt, and was now a British subject, aged 46, and living at 40 Lower Sloane Street with his wife Martha, aged 43 (born 1818, whereas the 1851 census says born 1820), and four children: Frances Martha (or Maude) aged 14 (born 1847), John aged 11 (born 1850), Martha aged 6 (born 1855) and Jane Fatimah aged 3 (born 1858).

A year later, on 22 February 1862, James Haliburton, Bedair’s former employer and the man who had brought him to England, died

in Edinburgh aged 73. The newspapers referred to him as being 'formerly of St Leonard's on Sea', and that he was 'a descendant of the ancient Scottish family of the Haliburtons, a branch of which Sir Walter Scott was connected on the maternal side'. None of the newspapers mentioned that Burton had spent the best part of 12 years wandering all over Egypt or attempted to bring one of the first live giraffes to England. It is not known whether Bedair was informed of the death, for it is doubtful that he had seen Burton since Burton and Dudu, now known as Andriana Garofaliki Haliburton, had moved to Edinburgh in 1838. Bedair received nothing from Burton's will. After Burton died, Andriana lived in Edinburgh, ignored by the Burton family, until her own death in 1883.

Bedair continued to accompany travellers to the Middle East. However, because a naturalised British subject could only stay out of the country for up to six months at any one time, in November 1863, Bedair applied to have his passport extended by four months so he could embark on a trip lasting nearly a year. Bedair, or more likely his employer, was clearly in a hurry to leave because Bedair made his application on 13 November and he called on the Secretary of State at the Home Department to collect his approved licence three days later. It is not known who had employed him.

In 1867, Bedair was again in Egypt, accompanying Francis Conyngham and his wife 'to see the scenes of Arabian Nights in real life'. They travelled up the Nile and, in March 1868, crossed over into Sinai in the company of an unnamed English clergyman who was journeying to Jerusalem. Conyngham recorded the journey in *Leaves from my Journal* (1868):

'Now for our days. We rose generally at 6 am; breakfast as soon as possible, and in the open air (although the morning air was sharp); then mounted our camels, which were grazing all around us, roaring at being laden; and away we went until about 12, when we usually stopped until about 1, for an hour or so, to have luncheon, consisting of dates, hard-boiled eggs, oranges, cold fowls, etc., during which time our baggage camels went ahead till about 4 pm, when the sheik chose some place where there were shrubs growing for the camels to graze on. How delightful it was, after going on hour after hour through those dreary wild valleys, to come on our little encampment, consisting of two tents, and one for cooking, in which old Mohamed, the cook and Bedair, our dragoman, slept.

... No words of mine can do justice to the healthfulness of the Desert air, so soft and balmy. Travellers talk much of the freedom of the Desert – and to the extent this is true – but if one reflects, as we did, how completely we were at the mercy of our guides, and that the smallest Arab boy, with a knowledge of the Desert, was superior to us Europeans, and that without their guidance we should be lost in a few hours, I think one's own sense of complete independence dwindles down to a sense of dependence on the Sons of the Desert. ... A sense of calamity befell our cook, who being, as I have said

before, more of a sailor than a horseman, came to sad grief by parting company with his camel, and I thought at first his back was broken, as he gave a fearful shriek, and lay senseless on the ground. However, we picked him up and did our best for him, but it was no joking having our cook on the sick list, and our dinners were not so good in consequence. We could not help feeling what an awful fix we should be in if one of us had fallen off and broken a limb, with no doctor to set it. It made me shudder to think that it might happen in one moment to my wife, and no help near'.

Bedair's journey with the Conynghams may not have been his last. Although information has not yet come to light about all of his visits to Europe, Egypt and the Middle East, and who employed him, he was doubtless on another journey when he died at Alexandria on 16 June 1874. Whether, as Conyngham described, no help was near or he was with any family or friends in Egypt is not known. How long it took before his wife and family learned of his death can only be wondered at. His will was proved 28 July 1874, noting that his effects were valued at less than £200.

His wife Martha continued to live at 40 Lower Sloane Street with her four children. Records suggest Emily Mary Bedair died in Fulham in March 1878, aged 27, and John Bedair died in Whitechapel in August 1887, aged 38. Having lost her only son, Martha decided to leave London. Accompanied by Frances, she moved to Worthing on the south coast of England. The Post Office Directory for 1887 suggests she first arrived in that year. A last record of the family is given in the 1891 Census and has Martha Bedair living at 28 Grafton Road, Worthing and, at the age of 77, running a lodging house with the help of her daughter Fanny, aged 30 [although her age does not make sense if she was born in 1847]. Also living with them and described as a granddaughter and scholar, is Violet Finlayson, born in Hammersmith. The Census provides the further detail that Martha Elizabeth Bedair [aged 33], is married to Alexander Finlayson and that they have three children at home in Fulham, Violet E. Finlayson [aged 4], Alexander Finlayson [aged 6], and Archibald Finlayson [aged 1].

Martha Bedair died at 2 Delta Villas, Grafton Road, Worthing, on 22 January 1895. Her effects were worth £31.10s and probate was awarded to Frances Catherine Martha Bedair. Frances did not stay in Worthing and moved to 564 Fulham Road to be close to her sister Martha Elizabeth Finlayson. The 1901 Census indicates that her niece Violet Finlayson, aged 21, was sharing her home. Frances died in June 1922.

Mohammed Ashgar or, as he was later known, John Bedair, is one of the handful of Egyptians who came to England for some adventure in the 1830s, became a Christian, married an Englishwoman and had four children who were English. Arriving in England in December

1835, at the age of 20, and dying in Egypt in 1874, at the age of 59, would suggest that he lived in London for some 39 years. However, because he was regularly spending months at a time in Europe, Egypt and other parts of the Middle East, he may in the end only have spent ten years living in his adopted country. That Bedair was employed as a courier and dragoman by some of the wealthiest and best educated people of their day is a good indication that Burton had been right to be impressed by him and had made a sensible decision in inviting him to England to better himself. Burton may also have assisted in teaching Bedair to speak and write English – abilities that enabled him to secure paid employment and earn respect from those he met and travelled with. It may be conjectured that many travellers who learned about the monuments of Egypt from the knowledge Mohammed Ashgar (or John Bedair) had benefited from his association with so many early 19th-century travellers, collectors and Egyptologists such as Wilkinson, Hay and Lane. It is in this context that Bedair should be acknowledged as a traveller and for being instrumental in encouraging people from Europe and America to visit the country of his birth and learn more about both the modern and the ancient Egyptians.

Notes

- 1 British Library, AddMss 38094 f168 + 169
- 2 British Library, AddMss 38094 f141 + 142
- 3 Neville-Rolfe Collection
- 4 Neville-Rolfe Collection
- 5 University College Library London, Greenough Papers 35/2
- 6 University College Library London, Greenough Papers 35/2
- 7 British Library, AddMss 38094 f73 + 74
- 8 Bodleian Library, Wilkinson Papers, Letter -9-09-1834
- 9 Bodleian Library, Wilkinson Papers, Letter -4-11-1834
- 10 Neville-Rolfe Collection
- 11 British Library, AddMss 38094 f93 + 94
- 12 Universty College Library London, Greenough Papers 35/2
- 13 Neville-Rolfe Collection
- 14 Bodleian Library, Wilkinson Papers, Letter -8-12-1835
- 15 British Library, AddMss 38094 f93 + 94
- 16 British Library, AddMss 38094 f122 + 123
- 17 British Library, AddMss 38094 f168 + 169
- 18 National Archives HO 1/96/3271

An Innovative Antiquarian: Alexander Henry Rhind's Excavations in Egypt and His Collection in the National Museums Scotland

Ross Irving and Margaret Maitland

The eponymous Rhind Mathematical Papyrus, the most extensive document on Egyptian mathematics surviving today, is well-known and much studied.¹ However, the man who acquired it, Alexander Henry Rhind (1833–63), and his contribution to archaeology in Egypt and Scotland is less well known.² Although his career was of short duration, his achievements were many, including pioneering contributions to early Scottish and Egyptian archaeology, the advocacy for the protection of archaeological remains in Britain and Egypt, contributing to the collections and displays at the former National Museum of Antiquities in Scotland (now part of National Museums Scotland) and his bequests to further Scottish archaeology.

Rhind probably deserves the title of the first professional archaeologist to excavate in Egypt (Figs 7.1 and 7.2). The pioneering nature of his archaeological work there was the product of his education and early work in Scotland. Influenced by Scandinavian archaeology, the scientific study of prehistory in Scotland had advanced in the 1840s and 1850s.³ Significant developments occurred in 1851 with the opening of the new Society of Antiquaries Museum in Edinburgh⁴ and the publication of Daniel Wilson's *The Archaeology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*.

An influential figure, Wilson (1816–92) used the Scandinavian Three Age system (Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age) to organise the new museum. In his book, which applied this system to Scottish prehistory, Wilson emphasised the different understandings of the past that could be drawn from using artefacts rather than just written

records.⁵ The Three Age system, as developed by Christian Jurgensen Thomsen (1788–1865), looked at objects as evidence, and placed importance on ‘closed finds’ (contemporaneous deposits of objects, particularly undisturbed grave groups) to create typologies.⁶ J. J. A. Worsaae (1821–85) was the first to prove Thomsen’s theories through excavation and the use of stratigraphy. Rhind encountered the work of these archaeologists through the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in Edinburgh, as well as a visit to Thomsen’s arrangement in the National Museum of Denmark,⁷ and through translating and reviewing Worsaae’s writing.⁸ Rhind clearly recognised that artefacts, when properly recorded, offered another type of evidence to written records that could be just as valuable. During his earliest excavations in Scotland, he tried carefully to record his finds and keep them together as groups. When he finally went to Egypt, Rhind would use this same approach, one that was very different to that of his contemporaries. In particular, he expressed an aim to find and excavate an intact tomb, which would allow him to gather the evidence he knew was needed to better understand Egyptian archaeology.



Figure 7.1: Frontispiece from A Memoire of the late Alexander Henry Rhind, of Sibster, by John Stewart, Edinburgh 1864.



Figure 7.2: Portrait of Alexander Henry Rhind of Sibster, oil on canvas, by Alexander S. Mackay, 1874 (H.OD 7). © National Museums Scotland

SCOTTISH EXCAVATIONS

Rhind, who was born and raised in Caithness in the north of Scotland, is often erroneously referred to as a lawyer, which has coloured the way he has been understood. Although he may have originally intended to train as a lawyer, he actually first studied natural history and natural philosophy at the University of Edinburgh, before turning his attention to classes on Scottish history and antiquities taught by

Professor Cosmo Innes (1789–1874).⁹ Rhind's earliest excavation work was carried out in the parish of Wick, in his native Caithness. He was interested in the sepulchres and stone dwellings that still survived there, owing largely to the landscape in the southern part of the county 'having been exempt from the obliterating influences of husbandry'.¹⁰

The first of these was the exploration of a set of cairns in Yarrows, Wick, in 1851, an account of which was published three years later in the *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*. Rhind clearly recognised the importance and scientific value in preserving the context in which objects were found and used maps with a letter system showing find spots and illustrations of artefacts. The careful attention with which Rhind approached archaeological excavation is also clear: 'every precaution was taken that nothing should escape, and every spadeful cast up from the bottom was subjected to the closest scrutiny'.¹¹ The quality of his work drew the attention of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, who elected him a Fellow at just 19 years of age.¹²

In 1853, Rhind supervised the excavation of a 'Picts' House' at Kettleburn in Caithness (Fig. 7.3). We know this structure today as a 'broch'. It was a very early example of a salvage excavation.¹³ The landowner 'found their (the ruins) demolition indispensable', but gave Rhind every assistance in his work. The whole collection of artefacts, both archaeological and osteological, was sent to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland and a report was published.¹⁴ In this way, Rhind was able to preserve the assemblage intact along with the context in which it was found. The report included a detailed description of the excavation with plans of the building and its interior, as well as illustrations of the finds. These finds formed the first collection made from the systematic excavation of a broch,¹⁵ and are still in the collection of National Museums Scotland today.¹⁶ It was one of the earliest broch excavations to have been published in more than the briefest way.¹⁷ It is clear from his report that Rhind did not truly understand the nature of the structure that he was recording, but it is only from his detailed notes and plans that we are now able to identify the structure as a 'broch'. Rhind himself stated, 'It has been my intention on the present occasion simply to record a series of facts, and I did not propose to make any general observations.'¹⁸ He was reluctant to date the 'Picts' House' based on the artefacts he found within because 'these are not necessarily the work of the original occupants, there being strong grounds for believing that many of the "Picts'-Houses" were inhabited ... during successive ages'.¹⁹ Interesting for its early date, Rhind's speculation was correct as the majority of broch sites seem to have been inhabited over many centuries.²⁰

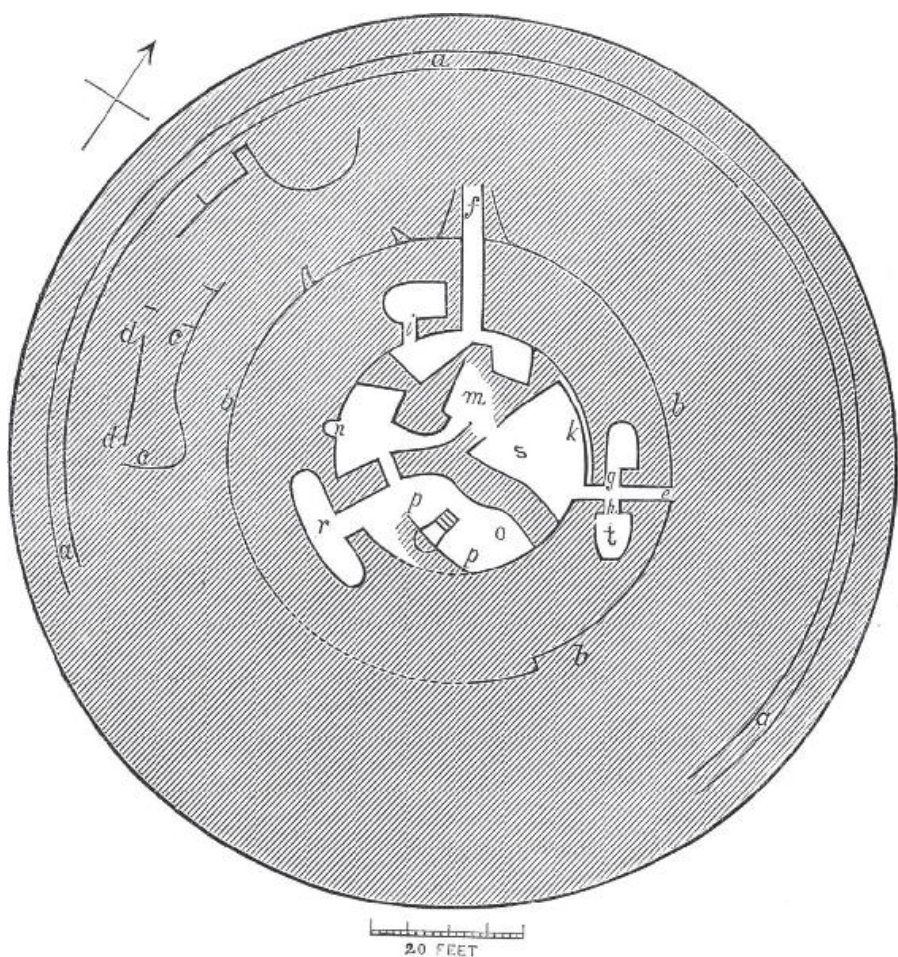


Figure 7.3: Plan of Kettleburn broch, after A. H. Rhind, 'Notice of the Exploration of a Picts House at Kettleburn, in the County of Caithness', *Archaeological Journal* 10, 1853, pl. 1.

Rhind's work in Scotland was well thought of, but cannot be considered as any more innovative than that of his peers in Northern Europe. It did, however, provide a solid foundation of good archaeological practice that he would take with him to Egypt.

HIS WORK IN EGYPT

Rhind's change in focus from Scotland to Egypt, and other warmer locales, was prompted by a decline in his health.²¹ Egypt was probably particularly appealing after a series of developments in 1854, including the opening of the new Egyptian gallery at the British Museum, the publication of John Gardner Wilkinson's *A Popular Account of the Ancient Egyptians* and the opening of the Crystal Palace

Egyptian Court.²² Rhind did not formally study Egyptology, but rather gathered knowledge from extensive independent reading of Champollion, Lepsius, and others, as well as extensive correspondence with the leading British Egyptologists of the time, Sir John Gardner Wilkinson (1797–1875) and Samuel Birch (1813–85).²³

From his perspective as an experienced archaeologist, Rhind offered a critique of the existing state of Egyptology, which until then had mainly been driven by collectors and by linguists. He condemned the national French and Prussian scientific expeditions for conducting only survey work and failing to attempt the systematic clearance, excavation and recording of a single tomb or temple as a whole: ‘Everywhere this body [the Prussian expedition] made free use of the hammer and crowbar; and if half the absent groups in tombs and temples, whose removal is attributed to Dr. Lepsius, were carried off by him, he certainly dealt with the monuments with no sparing hand’.²⁴

He accused them of setting a bad example that was then followed by collectors. Rhind argued that it was not necessary to bring back actual relief blocks to museums; Wilkinson had made copies, and Rhind himself took ‘squeezes’ (threedimensional copies formed by pressing wet, moldable paper into a relief) from Theban tombs. Rhind argued that ‘to bring the ruins piecemeal to Europe might be deemed as advisable as to break off the mouldings from some remarkable Gothic edifice in Germany, and deposit them in London or Paris’.²⁵

Rhind was determined to pursue a different approach to investigating ancient Egypt.²⁶ When he obtained permission to conduct his own excavations, he was sensible of the responsibility that lay with the opportunity: ‘I possess here where I have taken up my position a sort of irresponsible power. I certainly shall not abuse it’.²⁷ His attitudes towards objects had been shaped by his experience of more modest prehistoric material culture in Scotland and northern Europe. As such, Rhind took an interest in ordinary people and simple objects not always shared by his peers, collecting tools and pottery vessels,²⁸ and noting minute details, for example a sherd with traces of plaster used to cement a sarcophagus lid.²⁹ Rhind published a full account of his two seasons excavating in Egypt in his 1862 monograph *Thebes, Its Tombs and Their Tenants, Ancient and Present, Including a Record of Excavations in the Necropolis*. His archaeological recording techniques were especially progressive for Egypt at that time; for example, a carefully drawn plan of burial chambers at Giza.³⁰ There were few Egyptologists at the time who were drawing plans of their excavations, the closest comparable work being conducted by Auguste Mariette, although his early plans were much less detailed and he did not record the locations of find spots for objects.³¹

While many scholars of the time tended to generalise about ancient Egypt, often treating its culture as monolithic,³² Rhind held an interest in understanding how material culture changed and developed over time. As European archaeology sought to interpret its prehistory through the Three Age system, Rhind made tentative attempts towards the periodisation of Egyptian funerary objects. His intended means of achieving this was to find an intact tomb, in order to gain a better understanding of Egyptian funerary customs from a complete burial assemblage in context. He wrote from Cairo on 3 December 1856 in a letter published in the *John O’Groat Journal*: ‘One of my chief designs here is to discover, if possible, tombs of the date of the eighteenth and nineteenth dynasties that have never been disturbed, and in which the deposits remain *in situ*. It appears to me that facts of considerable interest and even importance might be evolved from a precise comparison’³³

During his second trip to Egypt in the winter of 1856–57, Rhind found the tomb he had been looking for in the necropolis at Sheikh Abd el-Qurna (Fig. 7.4). He carefully recorded the layout of the tomb both in plan and section, including the dimensions of the structure, and the specific locations where he found extraordinary objects, such as a unique painted funerary canopy (NMS A.1956.353). Rhind gave a remarkably sound interpretation of the tomb’s complexities. Just as he had done at Kettleburn, he demonstrated an interest not only in the objects themselves, but also the information they could provide about the history of the usage of the site. He deduced that the tomb must have originally dated to the 18th Dynasty based on its location in the Qurna necropolis and the fragmentary coffin remains left in the tomb, but he also realised that it had been reused.³⁴ The lower chambers of the tomb had remained sealed, and he recognised the distinctive style of the burial goods as Roman. He also deduced that the occupants of the tomb were likely all members of the same family.³⁵ These inferences were confirmed by inscriptional evidence relating to the occupants – Montsuef (Fig. 7.5), his wife Tanuat, her father Calisiris, as well as a regnal date on their bilingual funerary papyri (NMS A.1956.313–4) corresponding to 9 BCE.³⁶

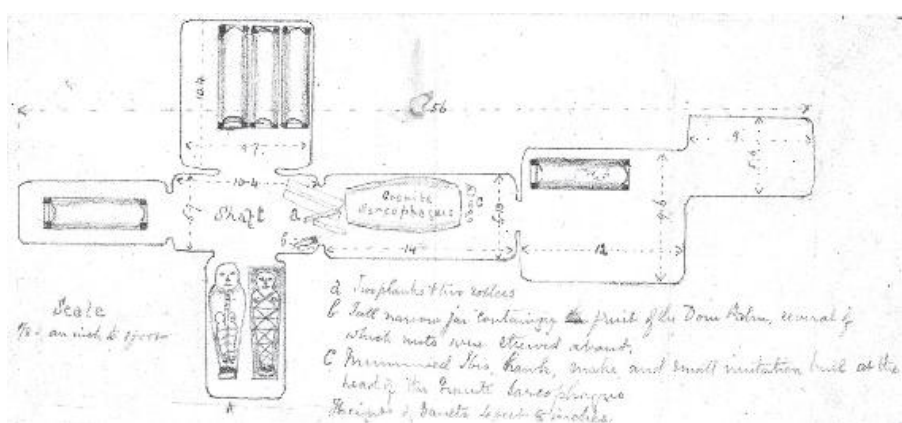


Figure 7.4: Plan of the lower chambers of the intact Roman Egypt tomb at Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, excavated by A. H. Rhind: SAS Archives Internal Ms. UC60/10. © National Museums Scotland.

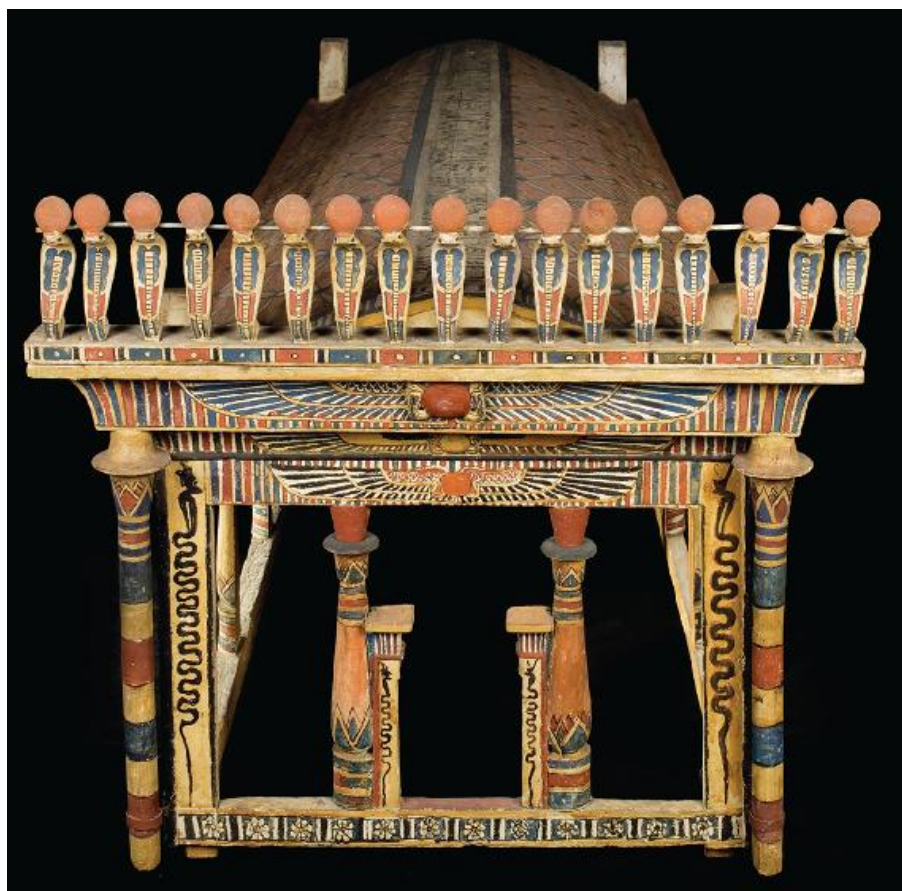


Figure 7.5: Roman Egyptian funerary canopy of Montsuef, c. 9 BC, excavated in the intact tomb at Sheikh Abd el-Qurna (A.1956.353). © National Museums Scotland.

Because of the intact nature of the burial, Rhind was able to offer an

analysis of funerary beliefs in early Roman Egypt, noting that certain burial traditions had continued from earlier times, such as mummification, but that many had been adapted in some way, such as the dummy canopic jars and the bilingual funerary papyri in hieratic and demotic, or had ceased altogether, as evidenced by the complete lack of shabtis.³⁷ As with Kettleburn, Rhind's attention to detail and his preservation of artefacts has made it possible to reassess the tomb meaningfully and identify additional reuse during the Late Period (e.g. NMS A.1956.181–2).³⁸

Another very fruitful reassessment of Rhind's work by Aidan Dodson and Jac J. Janssen revealed his discovery of a cache of mummies to be the daughters of King Thutmose IV (1400–1390 BCE). Many royal mummies were re-interred during the 21st Dynasty (1069–945 BCE). After being moved to an anonymous tomb in Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, the princesses were simply identified by plain wooden labels with their names and titles written in hieratic (NMS A.1956.154–67).³⁹

Rhind's archaeological approach brought a fresh perspective to Egyptological issues of the day, such as the debate about the use of iron and bronze in ancient Egypt. Gardner Wilkinson had argued that:

'to conclude, from the want of iron instruments, or arms, bearing the names of early monarchs of a Pharaonic age, that bronze was alone used, is neither just nor satisfactory; since the decomposition of that metal, especially when buried for ages in the nitrous soil of Egypt, is so speedy as to preclude the possibility of its preservation And Herodotus mentions the iron tools used by the builders of the Pyramids'.⁴⁰

Rhind countered this argument:

'in forming a judgment on this subject I would rather rely, not on the negative evidence of what the tombs may as yet have failed to offer, but on the more positive testimony deducible from what they have produced. Looking in the light of illustrative circumstances ... it is not easy to see from it that there was room, for the use of iron. Applied to nearly every practical purpose it is bronze we meet with'.⁴¹

Rhind questioned the lack of provenance for certain purportedly ancient iron objects, and noted that the full typological range of metal tools in ancient Egypt could be found executed in copper or bronze, a conclusion borne out in our modern understanding of ancient Egyptian metallurgy.⁴² Rhind's new approach and the archaeological techniques that he brought to Egyptology would not be surpassed until the arrival in Egypt, almost 25 years later, of William Matthew Flinders Petrie (1853–1942).

It was working through the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland that Rhind developed his progressive archaeological techniques, and it was also the Society that provided an opportunity to share this with the public. In 1859, Rhind was involved in the re-display of the National Museum of Antiquities in its new home on the Mound in Edinburgh (now the Royal Academy).⁴³ In the museum, Rhind, as excavator, was able to take responsibility for the display of his own finds.

Although the Rhind collection (transferred to the Royal Museum of Scotland in 1954–56, and now part of National Museums Scotland) has been referred to in the past as a bequest, his will and the society's records reveal no evidence that any of the material came into the collections after Rhind's death. In fact, records show that Rhind wasted no time in sending the objects he had collected back to the museum in Edinburgh, where the first shipment arrived in June 1857, having been sent directly from Alexandria to Southampton.⁴⁴

Since Rhind had visited the chief museums in Europe, the committee formed to 'determine the principles on which the arrangement of the National Museum was to proceed' requested his advice.⁴⁵ From the museum catalogue, partially written by Rhind himself, we can see that the Egyptian antiquities were arranged in groups typologically, for example: 'statuettes', 'vases', 'inscribed pottery', 'tools', etc.⁴⁶ Although the necessities of display resulted in the separation of assemblages, Rhind contextualised these objects by noting their provenance on the labels, and by displaying drawings and plans of their archaeological context. Displayed alongside these were Rhind's squeezes of Theban tomb reliefs. Thus, he was able to present the artefacts as archaeological evidence, and set them in a display that put them in context and related them to one another.

Rhind fully realised the importance of the relationships between objects from the same assemblage and their instructive capability as an intact group, as indicated by his bold response to Samuel Birch's request to obtain the bilingual papyri from the intact tomb (NMS A.1956.313–4) for the British Museum. Rhind refused on the grounds that they could not be separated from the objects with which they had been found, stating that 'the argument seemed unanswerable that it would hardly be desirable to separate them from the very mummies and other important objects discovered in the same tomb'.⁴⁷

In the National Museum of Antiquities, the full involvement of Rhind, the actual excavator of the material himself, ensured that they were properly labelled and contextualised as archaeological evidence.

In the winter of 1862–63, Rhind began his last trip to Egypt. Much weakened by his illness, he was unable to excavate, but he was no less ambitious in his pursuits, charting measurements pertaining to the history of the Nile inundation, travelling at least as far into Sudan as the second cataract and compiling a comparative language analysis of Nubian dialects. On his way back to Scotland, he died in his sleep in Switzerland, just one month short of his thirtieth birthday.⁴⁸

What might have been an illustrious career was cut short much too early. Although he was much celebrated in Edinburgh in the years shortly after his death, his achievements have gone largely unacknowledged over the past century. Nevertheless, he left behind a remarkable legacy. In his will, he left a large bequest to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, including his valuable library, a sum to fund archaeological work in his native Caithness⁴⁹ and to host an annual public lecture series on archaeology, which continue to this day as the prestigious Rhind Lectures.⁵⁰ His legacy also lives on at National Museums Scotland, which is still home to hundreds of the objects that he brought back from Egypt. Rhind's contextual approach has provided the kind of information that is rare for collections of such an early date.

In Scotland, Rhind was part of a group of early archaeologists who, along with their Scandinavian colleagues, were developing scientific techniques and theories to study prehistory. While he did not invent these archaeological techniques, Rhind's legacy has helped shape how Scotland and Egypt's past are understood. He was influential and much admired by his peers. R. W. Cochran Patrick, in an 1887 lecture to the Glasgow Archaeological Society, said, 'The credit of being the first to employ a strictly scientific method of collecting archaeological facts, must be given to the late Mr Rhind, Mr Petrie and Dr Anderson'.⁵¹

It was this more scientific approach that Rhind took with him to Egypt, and which distinguished him from his contemporaries. Current archaeological practice highlights many limitations to Rhind's theories and his techniques, but viewed alongside his fellow Egyptologists, his work was remarkable. His careful recording and illustration of site plans, find spots and artefacts is particularly notable, as well as his preservation of assemblages, whose value as intact groups he recognised, although he did not always consistently apply these practices. He saw objects as evidence for interpreting sites and their history, and contributed to the development of typological systems to date ancient Egyptian material culture. Furthermore, he imparted the results of his excavations by devising contextualised museum displays for the benefit of the public. Rhind's output was impressive for only a few years' study and two short seasons excavating in Egypt, especially

considering his ill-health. One can only wonder at the kind of impact he might have had if he had lived longer. Flinders Petrie is generally credited as the Father of Egyptian Archaeology, considering the influence he had on the field. However, he started excavating when archaeology was a much more established field and had a career spanning over 50 years. In 1921, Petrie was himself invited to give the Rhind Lecture in Edinburgh, and his reply stands as a fitting testament to the esteem in which he held Rhind:

Dear Sir,

I am honoured by the invitation to deliver the Rhind lectures in 1921. I should the more wish to accept this, seeing that Egypt has never been the subject of the lectures, although Rhind did such good work in that country.⁵²

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the organising committee and participants of the ASTENE conference in Birmingham. We are grateful to Henrietta Lidchi and our National Museums Scotland colleagues for their support. For enlightening conversations and assistance with archival research, special thanks to David V. Clarke, Trevor Cowie, Alan Saville, Simon Gilmour and the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Gemma Park, Evgenia Michailidou, Claire Gilmour, Richard B. Parkinson and the British Museum Department of Ancient Egypt and Sudan and the Department of the Middle East and staff at the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

Notes

- 1 T. E. Peet (1923) *The Rhind Mathematical Papyrus, British Museum 10057 and 10058* London; A. B. Chace (1979) *The Rhind Mathematical Papyrus: Free Translation and Commentary with Selected Photographs, Transcriptions, Transliterations, and Literal Translations*. Reston, Va.; G. Robins and C. Shute (1987) *The Rhind Mathematical Papyrus*. London; N. MacGregor (2010) 'Rhind Mathematical Papyrus' in *A History of the World in 100 Objects*. London, pp. 102–10.
- 2 The only substantial publication about Rhind is a memoir published a year after his death: J. Stuart (1864) *Memoir of the Late Alexander Henry Rhind, of Sibster*. Edinburgh. See also: A. Dodson and J. J. Janssen (1989) 'A Theban Tomb and its Tenants', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 75, pp. 125–38; T. W. Bayne (2004) 'Rhind, Alexander Henry (1833–63)', in H. C. G. Matthew (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford; A. M. Dodson (2008–09) 'Alexander Henry Rhind at Sheikh Abd el Gurna' *KMT* 19(4), pp. 38–52; C. Gilmour (2010) *Alexander Henry Rhind: His Contribution to Egyptology*, unpublished MLitt dissertation; M. L. Bierbrier (2012) *Who Was Who in Egyptology*. London, p. 463; J. A. Packer (2013) *The Scottish Contribution to Egyptology*, pp. 39–48.

- 3 M. Ash (1981) “‘A fine, genial, hearty band’”: David Laing, Daniel Wilson and Scottish Archaeology’, in A. S. Bell (ed.), *The Scottish Antiquarian Tradition*. Edinburgh, p. 102.
- 4 B. G. Trigger (1989) *A History of Archaeological Thought*. Cambridge, p. 82.
- 5 *Ibid.*, p. 83; D. Wilson (1851) *The Archaeology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland*. Edinburgh.
- 6 Trigger, *History*, p. 76.
- 7 J. Stuart (1864) *Memoir of the late Alexander Henry Rhind, of Sibster*. Edinburgh, p. 2.
- 8 According to Stuart, *Memoir*, pp. 2, 6, in 1851, Rhind translated Worsaae’s *Die Nationale Alterthumskunde in Deutschland: Reisebemerkungen* (1846), and reviewed his *An Account of the Danes and Norwegians in England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1852) in the *London Quarterly Review* no. 4, Sept. 1854.
- 9 Stuart, *Memoir*, pp. 1, 7; Gilmour, *Rhind*, pp. 13–14.
- 10 A. H. Rhind (1854) ‘Results of Excavations in Sepulchral Cairns in the North of Scotland’, *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 2, p. 1.
- 11 *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- 12 Stuart, *Memoir*, p. 2.
- 13 E. W. MacKie (2007) *The Roundhouses, Brochs and Wheelhouses of Atlantic Scotland c. 700 BC-AD 500: architecture and material culture, the Northern and Southern Mainland and the Western Islands*, part 2, vol. 1. Oxford, p. 457.
- 14 A. H. Rhind (1853) ‘Notice of the Exploration of a Pict’s House at Kettleburn, in the County of Caithness’, *Archaeological Journal* 10, p. 3; ‘An Account of an Extensive Collection of Archaeological Relics and Osteological Remains from a “Pict’s House” at Kettleburn, Caithness, Presented to the Society by A. Henry Rhind, Esq. F.S.A. Scot’, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 1, 1851–54, pp. 264–9; Stuart, *Memoir*, p. 3.
- 15 ‘Kettleburn Broch, Gillock’, *Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland*, <<http://canmore.rcahms.gov.uk/en/site/9242/details/kettleburn+broch+gillock/>>, accessed 9 January 2015.
- 16 Collection of finds from Kettleburn broch: National Museums Scotland accession numbers X.GI 12–15, 18, 24–25, 31, 33–37, 39, 43, 45–58, 62–65, 75–80.
- 17 MacKie, *Brochs*, p. 457.
- 18 Rhind, ‘Notice’, p. 12.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 13.
- 20 I. Armit (2002) *Towers in the North: the Brochs of Scotland*, Stroud, p. 81; Rhind’s speculation about the continued occupation of broch sites was evidenced twenty years later through stratigraphic excavation by William Traill in 1870, although this was not fully appreciated until 85 years later with the publication of R. B. K. Stevenson’s paper ‘Pins and the Chronology of Brochs’, *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 21, 1955; see Mackie, *Brochs*, p. 33.
- 21 Stuart, *Memoir*, p. 7.
- 22 S. Moser (2006) *Wondrous Curiosities: Ancient Egypt at the British Museum*, Chicago, p. 17; (2012) *Designing Antiquity: Owen Jones, Ancient Egypt and the Crystal Palace*, New Haven.
- 23 Bodleian Library, MSS. Wilkinson dep. a. 25, fols. 119–21, dep. d. 135, fols. 130–35, dep. d. 137, fols. 124b–c; British Museum Correspondence 1826–1867 II, nos. 4521, 4523, 5152–65.
- 24 A. H. Rhind (1856) ‘The Present Condition of the Monuments of Egypt and Nubia’, *Archaeological Journal* 13 (1), p. 159.
- 25 *Ibid.*, p. 160.
- 26 A. H. Rhind (1862) *Thebes, Its Tombs and Their Tenants, Ancient and Present*,

including a record of excavations in the necropolis, London; Rhind took up residence in a house on the West Bank of Thebes that had originally belonged to Henry Salt (1780–1827), the former British consul-general and collector (p. 79). Rhind obtained help in his excavations from a number of other notable early travellers in Egypt, including Lord Henry Scott (1832–1905) and Reverend Henry Stobart (1824–95; p. 165), as well as Francis Wenham (1824–1908) and Francis Frith (1822–98), the first commercial photographer to work in Egypt, then on his first trip to the country, who both helped in surveying the intact tomb (p. 96).

- 27 Stuart, *Memoir*, p. 14.
- 28 (1863) *Catalogue of Antiquities in the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*, Edinburgh, pp. 3, 7–9.
- 29 Rhind, *Thebes*, p. 122.
- 30 *Ibid.*, pp. 170–74; A. H. Rhind (1855–56) ‘On One of the Simple Forms of Burial in Use Among the Ancient Egyptians, observed in a recent excavation at Geezeh’, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 2, pp. 274–6.
- 31 A. Mariette (1856) *Choix de Monuments et de Dessins Découverts ou Executes pendant le Déblaiement du Sérapéum de Memphis*. Paris, plates 1–2.
- 32 E.g. J. G. Wilkinson (1854) *A Popular Account of the Ancient Egyptians*, vol. 2. London, pp. 356–400.
- 33 National Museums Scotland Library, Society of Antiquaries of Scotland Archives Internal Mss. UC60/28.
- 34 Rhind, *Thebes*, pp. 112–13. For more on this intact tomb group, see also B. Manley and A. Dodson (2010) *Life Everlasting: National Museums Scotland Collection of Ancient Egyptian Coffins*, Edinburgh, pp. 3–6, 122–27; C. Riggs (2005) *The Beautiful Burial in Roman Egypt: Art, Identity, and Funerary Religions*, Oxford, pp. 45–48, 180–82.
- 35 *Ibid.*, p. 122.
- 36 A. H. Rhind (1863) *Facsimiles of Two Papyri Found in a Tomb at Thebes, with a Translation by Samuel Birch and an Account of their Discovery*, London; H. Brugsch (1865) *A. Henry Rhind’s Zwei Bilingue Papyri Hieratisch und Demotisch*, Leipzig; G. Möller (1913) *Die Beiden Totenpapyrus Rhind des Museums zu Edinburg*, Leipzig; C. Riggs, *Beautiful Burial*, pp. 45–48; M. Smith (2009) *Traversing Eternity: Texts for the Afterlife from Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt*, Oxford, pp. 318–34, 341–48.
- 37 Rhind, *Thebes*, pp. 117–18.
- 38 M. Maitland, ‘Re-visiting A. H. Rhind’s Pioneering Excavation of an Intact Roman Egyptian Tomb at Thebes’, paper presented at the ARCE 2014 Annual Meeting, Portland, Oregon, 25 April 2014.
- 39 Dodson and Janssen, ‘Theban Tomb’, pp. 125–38.
- 40 Wilkinson, *Popular Account*, vol. 2, p. 155.
- 41 Rhind, *Thebes*, p. 230; (1862) ‘On the Use of Bronze and Iron in Ancient Egypt, with reference to general archaeology’, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 3, pp. 464–65.
- 42 E.g. J. Ogden, ‘Metals’ in P. T. Nicholson and I. Shaw (eds) (2000) *Ancient Egyptian Materials and Technology*, Cambridge, pp. 155–60, 166–68.
- 43 R. B. K. Stevenson, ‘The Museum, its Beginnings and its Development Part II: the National Museum to 1954’, in A. S. Bell (ed.) (1981), *The Scottish Antiquarian Tradition*. Edinburgh, p. 146.
- 44 National Museums Scotland, Minutes of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland 1853–1868, minutes of meeting 8 August 1857, p. 97.
- 45 Stuart, *Memoir*, p. 22.
- 46 (1863) *Catalogue of Antiquities in the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of*

Scotland. Edinburgh, pp. 1–12.

- 47 Letter from A. H. Rhind to Samuel Birch, 17 July 1857: British Museum Correspondence 1826–1867 II, no. 4521.
- 48 Stuart, *Memoir*, pp. 38–40.
- 49 The archaeological study of Caithness would benefit greatly from this fund, as well as important archaeologists such as Joseph Anderson, see J. Anderson, ‘On the Chambered Cairns of Caithness, with results of recent explorations’, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 6, 1864–66, pp. 442–51; J. Stuart, ‘Report to the Committee of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, appointed to arrange for the Application of a Fund left by the late Mr A. Henry Rhind, for Excavating Early Remains’, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 7, 1866–68, pp. 289–307; D. V. Clarke (2002) ‘The foremost figure in all matters relating to Scottish archaeology: aspects of the work of Joseph Anderson (1832–1916)’, *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 132, pp. 1–18.
- 50 Stuart, *Memoir*, pp. 43–4, 55–6; Stevenson, ‘Museum’, pp. 157–58.
- 51 Clarke, ‘Anderson’, p. 6.
- 52 National Museums Scotland Library, Society of Antiquaries of Scotland Archives Internal Mss. UC29/13.

From the Kremlin's Walls to the Foot of the Pyramids: Early Muscovite Travellers in Egypt

Maksim Lebedev

Russian travellers to Egypt and the Middle East, especially in pre-imperial times, are not well known outside Russia. Yet, there were many Russians who visited Middle Eastern countries and who have left descriptions of the lands they travelled through. The earliest of these Russian writings were called 'hozheniya', or 'walkings'. First appearing in the 12th century CE, the genre continued into the first decades of the 18th century, when they were replaced by the style of travellers' descriptions recognisable today. Unfortunately, the majority of these early writings have never been published in any language other than Russian, but they are undoubtedly of interest, especially to Ottomanists.

It would appear that educated citizens of the first Russian state, the Kievan Rus, began to learn about ancient Egypt after the adoption of Christianity in the late 10th century. This does not mean that north-eastern Slavs knew nothing about what was happening to the south of Constantinople. Certainly, they did, and some of them could have visited the Nile Valley and returned with stories and information. But this was at a time when the oral tradition was still strong, therefore, little is now known about these early travellers and their experiences.

The new religion, in its turn, brought the Kievan state into the political and cultural realm of the Byzantine Orthodox world of which Egypt was an integral part, even though it had been conquered, and was ruled over by, Muslims.

When translated into the old Slavic language, the Bible cast some light on ancient Egyptian history. However, the most important sources at the time for early medieval, classical and Pharaonic Egypt were the contents of the Byzantine chronicles. Such chronicles were

popular amongst literate Russians who used them to try and determine the place of the newborn Christian state within a wider world history. Many of the Byzantine chronicles were translated into old Slavic and old Russian and among them are the writings of George Syncellos [Γεώργιος Σύγκελλος], John Malalas [Ἰωάννης Μαλάλας], and George Amartolos [Γεώργιος Ἀμαρτωλός].

The first two authors relied extensively on the historical work of the Egyptian Manetho, who wrote a history of ancient Egypt in Greek. Although this work has not survived, citations from his writings can be found incorporated within the works of other contemporary and later writers and are still among the most important sources on ancient Egyptian history. Through their translations of the Byzantine chronicles, Russian scribes derived a knowledge of the Hellenistic view on the civilisations of the Nile Valley.

What is rather curious is the fact that Russian scribes tried to bring Manetho's text closer to their Slavic audience. Thus, for example, the first two Egyptian kings according to Manetho, namely Ptah (Hephaestus) and Re/Ra (Helios), were turned into the old Slavic gods Svarog and Dajdbog.

EARLIEST RUSSIAN TRAVELLERS TO EGYPT: AMBASSADORS AND PILGRIMS

Although Kievan Rus was now a part of Christendom, travel within it and abroad was rare and there is only one known reference during this time to a Russian visiting Egypt. It is written as a brief note in the so-called *Nikon or Patriarch's Chronicle*. Recorded under the year 1001, the chronicler reports that the Grand Duke Vladimir sent his ambassadors to Rome, Jerusalem, Babylon (probably Baghdad) and Egypt in order to learn more about these lands, their traditions and customs. No details were included of who these men were, the details of their travels, nor whether they returned home or not.

Soon after, a long period of feudal disunity began, which was followed by the collapse of the earliest Russian state after a series of defeats by the Mongols. This was definitely not the best time for anybody to consider travelling internally let alone externally.

The next reference to Russian travellers to Egypt appeared in the 14th century. That was the time when new knowledge about contemporary Egypt was emerging from travellers' personal experiences rather than the repetition of translated foreign texts with all of their inaccuracies. This new knowledge contributed to the expanding world-view of the Russian literate élite.

From a political point of view, this was also the time of a struggle

between Moscow and Lithuania for the lands of the former Kievan Rus. During that time, the Holy Land was visited by subjects of both the Grand Duke of Moscow and the Grand Duke of Lithuania. However, few from either group actually managed to reach Egypt. Of those who did, only two travellers left their notes and both had travelled from lands controlled by the Grand Duke of Lithuania.

It can only be guessed at how many accounts of Russian travels to Egypt have not survived from this time. For example, at the beginning of the 13th century, in the Kievan *Lives of the Fathers*, the Kiev monk Polycarp lamented his inability to compose such expressive texts as travellers to Jerusalem and Sinai used to write. Polycarp's statement suggests there had been a tradition of Russian pilgrim literature with its focus on the Middle East and Egypt that had existed until the early decades of the 13th century and had been lost over the course of time.

These first known reports of travels to the Nile valley were, alas, very brief and contained information on mainly contemporary Egypt with only scarce reference to the ancient past that had been based on traditional Christian sources.

Agrefeniy is probably the earliest Russian traveller whose description of his stay in Egypt has survived. He was the Archimandrite of the Monastery of the Virgin near Smolensk and in 1370, he visited the Holy Land as a pilgrim. Although Agrefeniy left a rather extensive written account of his journey, the actual details of his route are still in dispute. It is known only that he reached Constantinople and sailed to the Holy Land with stops at ports on a number of Greek islands, including Mitilena, Chios, Rodos, Patmos and Cyprus.

Cairo and Alexandria were probably his last destinations before his final voyage back to Constantinople. In respect of Egypt, Agrefeniy's description is very laconic with reports mainly concerning the distances between various cities on his way to sacred places: 'From Jerusalem to Gaza there are 3 days; from Gaza to Egypt (i.e. Cairo) – 12 days; from Egypt to Alexandria – 6 days...'.

In the 15th century, a monk from Kiev named Varsanofy visited Egypt. This was his second pilgrimage to the Middle East (1461–62) but his first trip to Egypt. Varsanofy stopped in Egypt on his way from Constantinople to the Holy Land via Crete, Rhodes, and Cyprus. Having reached the African coast at Damiyat (modern Damietta), he then sailed upstream and visited the 'city of Egupet', that is Cairo. Varsanofy stayed in Cairo for at least six weeks and, without doubt, looked in detail around the city and its neighbourhoods.

Unfortunately, the written account covering the six weeks is also rather laconic. Yet, it does contain the earliest description of Cairo and the River Nile that is known in Russian literature: 'The city of Egupet

lies on a plain under a mountain. Near the mountain a river from the Paradise runs – the golden-waved Nile. And another name for the river is Geon. The city is 2 miles breadthways [‘bredθweiz] and 12 miles lengthways’.

The River Nile apparently impressed the monk and he returns to its description again and again. He also mentions a ‘fierce beast’, which is undoubtedly the crocodile, but he offers no further details. Another curious thing he makes a special mention of is the date palm on which ‘delicious honey grows’.

Finally, Varsanofy gives the earliest known description of the pyramids to be found in Russian literature. These striking monuments were interpreted by the monk in accordance with the commonly held Christian tradition that ascribed the building of the pyramids to Joseph: ‘The granaries of Joseph the Handsome are over the river Nile opposite Old Misyur [Old Cairo]’.

TRAVELLERS OF THE NEW AGE: MERCHANTS AND STATE OFFICIALS

Three or four years later, a merchant from Moscow visited Egypt. While his family name remains a mystery, he is known as Vasily, his first name. Vasily travelled to the Middle East in 1465–66 and followed a less than traditional route. Instead of sailing to Constantinople and then calling at islands in the Aegean, as did many Russian pilgrims, he commenced his journey in the Ottoman Empire from its old capital of Bursa.

Leaving Bursa he made his way to inner Anatolia rather than going via Damascus and Palestine. Having reached the lands in Kurdistan, controlled at that time by Turkmen tribes, he turned to the south in the direction of the Syrian-Egyptian Mameluk Sultanate. He passed through Aleppo, Homs, Damascus and Gaza before finally reaching Cairo in late December 1465.

There is no direct reference in the text of Vasily’s travels to explain the main goals of his journey to the Middle East. Yet the content suggests that he took on all the risks and dangers of the adventure in order to collect information on the geographic, economic and political realities of the region which would be vital for the development of trade relations. It seems Vasily was not interested in biblical subjects, focusing his descriptions predominantly on the trade, infrastructure, social and military aspects of the country.

It is possible that Vasily, the merchant, is also the same person as Vasily Mamyrev, a prominent official of the Grand Duke of Moscow, Ivan III, in which case, among his many objectives may also have been

the establishment of diplomatic contacts with local rulers.

It should be noted that Vasily visited Asia Minor and the Middle East at the time of political unrest that was influencing European policy in the region. The Ottoman Empire was then confronting the pressure of the Turkmen tribes (Aq Qoyunlu), whose ruler Uzun Hasan had defeated the Turks and curbed their aggressive ambitions in Europe. At the same time, the expansion of the Ottoman Empire was giving rise to anxiety among the ruling élites of the Mameluk Sultanate and Karamanid Emirate.

Vasily records that it took him 100 days to reach Egypt from Bursa. He stayed in Egypt for about three weeks and was particularly impressed with Cairo (Egupet). He definitely realised its business potential: 'The city of Egupet is very big with fourteen thousand streets and on every street there are two gates and two guards who lit oil lamps And on every street there is a big market-place'.

In 1492–93, when Egypt had already been conquered by the Ottomans, the land on the Nile was visited by the Treasurer of the Grand Duke of Moscow, Mikhail Gireev (Grigoriev). This is probably the first attested official mission to Egypt sent from the Kremlin. Unfortunately, Mikhail Gireev did not write about his travels or leave any notes, although a brief, but nevertheless very popular, narrative survives describing his 40-day stay in Cairo, presumably written by someone who travelled with him. It is noteworthy, that Mikhail Gireev was known by the nickname 'Misur', perhaps to acknowledge his having travelled to Egypt.

The next journey to Egypt was undertaken by a merchant, Vasily Poznyakov. He was born in Smolensk, but his business was in Moscow. In 1558, Ivan IV, now better known as Ivan the Terrible, ordered Poznyakov and his son to join the state mission to the Middle East. The venture was inspired by the embassy of the Alexandrian Patriarch and Archbishop of Sinai who asked the Russian ruler to support Egyptian Christians with money. Ivan IV eagerly used this opportunity to establish closer relations with orthodox Christians in the East.

It should be remembered that the reign of Ivan IV was marked with a dramatic expansion of the Russian state to the east and south east, where a number of Muslim khanates ['kɑ:nert] came under the control of Moscow. This political success enabled Ivan to raise his claims to the title of Tsar which, as is well known, was derived from the Latin 'Caesar' and the Greek *καῖσαρ*. The new title had to support the claims of Ivan the Terrible for the Byzantine political legacy. Moscow was then proclaimed to be the Third Rome, while military expansion brought the borders of the Muscovite state closer to the limits of the Ottoman Empire. The embassy, with Poznyakov in the party, left

Moscow in October 1558.

While the official goal of the mission was to support Egyptian Copts, the personal task of Poznyakov was to study and write down the customs and traditions of the lands that they passed through on their way to Sinai. After a long and difficult journey and various misadventures, the embassy finally reached Istanbul and from there set off for Alexandria. Reaching Cairo in October 1559, Poznyakov spent only four days in the city, being most attentive in describing the Coptic churches.

Poznyakov was observant and detected the foreseeable decline of Old Cairo: 'With regard to Old Egypt, it is now deserted. Only few elderly Egyptians and gypsies live there while Turks and Christians do not live. The city was built of stone but has gone to ruin with only gates remained.'

After returning to Alexandria, the embassy continued towards Sinai and Jerusalem. On his way to St Catherine's monastery, Poznyakov was particularly amazed by the sight and nature of the desert: 'In their hermitages, there are no forests or grass. We had been walking through the desert for three days and did not see anything apart from sand and stones'. Having accomplished the mission, the embassy returned to Russia in December 1559.

At the beginning of the 17th century, Russia faced a decade of political crisis and disintegration resulting from the extinction of the old ruling dynasty and the intervention of Polish magnates. After the accession of the Romanovs, the Muscovite state began to restore its position in Europe and to continue with its traditional expansion towards the east.

In 1635, Vasily Gagara visited Egypt. He was a merchant from Kazan who made his fortune conducting trade with the eastern countries around the Caspian basin. Unlike his predecessors, Vasily Gagara went to Egypt via Tbilisi, Erevan, Ardagan, Aleppo, Damascus and Jerusalem. His return route from Egypt passed through Bulgaria and Moldavia. After wandering for three years, he eventually made his way back to Moscow.

Egypt must have particularly impressed Gagara, for his account of it is the most detailed, even in comparison with his description of the Holy Land. Gagara visited the pyramids that, like so many before him and after, he thought to be the granaries of Joseph, and he provided a new description of these monuments. It seems he even reached the Fayuum Oasis where he saw the fearsome spectacle of an ancient cemetery with corpses exposed from the sand: 'Near this lake there are human bones coming from the soil ... heads and hands, and legs, and ribs move as if they are alive, and the heads are with hair'.

If Varsanofy was the first Russian traveller who described the

Pyramids at Giza, Gagara provided the first description of the famous obelisk of Sesostri I at al-Maṭariyyah, ancient Heliopolis: 'In the vicinity of Egypt, there is a quadrangle stone 30 yards in height and 10 yards in width. The Turks call it a "pharaoh's spear" and there is a name of a pharaoh inscribed on it'.

Gagara was especially curious about Egyptian nature. He compared the Nile to the Volga river and eloquently described the harshness of desert travel. What also impressed Gagara was Egyptian fauna. This, for example, is his description of the crocodile: 'And there is a beast called corcodil in this Geon River and he lives in the water. His head is like the one of a frog but his eyes are like human and the character is the same. Its tail like the one of a catfish and it splashes around just like the catfish does. And the legs are four ... And if it sees a man, it courses him for a long distance and captures him and eats'.

Approximately 15 years later, Egypt was also visited by Arseny Sukhanov, a member of the provincial gentry, who had to leave his estate and take up a clerical career. Sukhanov was educated at a monastery in the vicinity of Moscow and found time to learn ancient Greek, Latin and Polish. After promotion to the court in Moscow, he continued his service as a theologian and diplomat at the court of Alexy Romanov, the father of Peter the Great.

By the middle of the 17th century, the Russian state was in a strong enough position to continue its expansion. Moscow raised claims for reuniting the former lands of the Kievan Rus under the control of the Tsar and was preparing to enter into a struggle for the Eastern Ukraine. If successful, the new Russian border would expand as far as the borders of the Crimean khanate, which was then under the protection of the Ottomans. This resulted in the Russian court's increasing need for up-to-date information about the Ottoman Empire and about the state of its Christian subjects, in particular.

Officially, the main goal of Arseny Sukhanov, who commenced his journey to the Middle East in February 1651, was to gather information on the state of the Greek Church under the Ottomans. However, he was a more curious person and went far beyond the scope of his mission to collect information on a much wider range of subjects, including attractions, manners and customs and the natural features of different regions of the empire.

Sukhanov was a very devoted pilgrim. This, for example, is his description of Neokastro, a town not far from Constantinople: 'Above the city there is a high and steep mountain. It is possible to surround the city with a rampart and shoot from this mountain without fear since the city is at the foot of the mountain and cannons cannot bombard it. Moreover, all the cannons are turned to the sea'. The notes made by Sukhanov concerning the fortifications and

infrastructure of many Ottoman towns, especially those in Turkish control, are very strategic and there is often a strong impression given to the reader that the report was written by a spy rather than a pilgrim.

A significant part of Sukhanov's writing deals with Egypt, which he reached in August 1651. As for many travellers, the first city in Egypt he encountered was Alexandria, which impressed him. He noted the remains of its glorious past but also its obvious decline: 'Alexandria is a city with the most beautiful buildings. There is no other city decorated in the same way. But now it is depopulated and only few people still live near the gates around the city while the centre is deserted and the buildings are collapsed'.

Sukhanov describes ancient ruins that were still well preserved and the two obelisks of Thutmose III, the so-called 'Cleopatra's needles': 'And there stands a pillar made of one stone. It is about 28 yards in its height and has four sides. And it is covered with unknown inscriptions from top to bottom: knives, bows, fishes, human heads, arms, legs, axes, and many more signs still unknown. One says that this is a writing of wisdom. And another pillar is not far from the already described. It is the same in quality, inscriptions and size, but has fallen down and lies on its side'.

He also recorded the legend that one of these obelisks originally stood at the head of Alexander the Great's body with the other at his feet. Another significant monument that drew his particular attention was the so-called 'Pompey's column', erected by the Emperor Diocletian, and the ruins that surrounded it.

Being well-educated, Sukhanov was the first Russian traveller who considered the pyramids at Giza to be Pharaonic tombs rather than the granaries erected by Joseph. Contemporary Cairo received a great deal of Sukhanov's attention. He even tried to explain to his readers the existence of multiple names for the city: 'Misir is in Arabic language, Egypt – in Greek, Cairo – in Latin'.

Sukhanov recorded that he was also terrified when visiting an ancient cemetery somewhere in the vicinity of the Nile: 'Dead people come out every year on this field. They appear at night on the eve of the Good Friday from year to year and lie atop the soil even up to the Ascension Day. But after the Ascension, these bodies disappear and do not come out before the Good Friday'. Having a critical mind, Sukhanov did not believe this story, but the Christians whom he met in Egypt and the Archbishop of Sinai confirmed the phenomenon: 'This is true. However, complete people came out in the past, while today there are only bones and destroyed people, hands, legs, heads, and other limbs, and it is hardly possible to find a complete one'.

Like many other European travellers, Sukhanov was impressed with

the flooding of the Nile, which he witnessed at Rosetta. Because he had grown up in the vicinity of Moscow, he compared the Nile to his home waterway, the Oka river, and admitted that at several points along its length the Nile was even narrower than the Oka. While touring Egypt, he bought for the state pharmacy more than 500 grams of an unknown substance called 'andagryz' [ambergris?].

Two years later, Suhanov was sent to the Middle East once again. During this visit, his main goal was to purchase books for governmental institutions. He returned to Moscow with almost 500 volumes that, apart from some religious literature, included the writings of Strabo, Herodotus and Plutarch. And this library certainly expanded the views of the Russian literate élite on Egypt and its ancient past. At the end of his life, Sukhanov became head of the State Printing House in Moscow that later became the centre of Russian typography.

UNWILLING TRAVELLERS

During the 16th and 17th centuries, Istanbul was famous as a major slave market. Among the slaves traded in the city were many Slavs and Russians. The most famous of these was Roksolana (or Hurem), who had been enslaved somewhere in the Western Ukraine and then sold to the hereditary prince, the future Sultan Mehmed II. Although personal data of most of these people has been lost forever, there were some who recorded their stories.

Among the last of the Muscovite travellers to Egypt in pre-imperial times, is one unwilling traveller who was brought to the Ottoman Empire in captivity. Soon after his return, his notes, which he had secretly written over many years and had managed to keep hidden, were published under the title *Description of the Turkish Empire*.

While the name of this unfortunate man and his background are not known, judging from the published text, he is likely to have been a well-trained military officer. There are also some grounds for assuming that he may have been a young aristocrat named Feodor Dorohin, who was captured by Crimean Tartars and who spent 12 years away from home between 1662 and 1674.

According to the author of the *Description*, he walked all over the Empire, excluding a few minor provinces. Since he travelled a great deal, he was hardly a man who shared the common destiny of so many Russian slaves in the Ottoman Empire during the 17th century. In fact, there is a strong reason to suppose that he moved through the country accompanying a Turkish army. And if so, he may have changed his faith and become a Muslim. The indifference shown to

the principal 'cult' attractions of the Holy Land that he visited during the course of his wanderings perhaps backs up this assumption.

The *Description* demonstrates that during his stay in the Ottoman Empire, the Russian officer must have learned Turkish and Arabic, or at the least have been able to understand what was being said. However, he was also at something of a disadvantage when his work is compared with the numerous books written by western European travellers of that time who were often well educated, if not scholars, and who provided in their texts extensive historical and cultural information. On the other hand, the narrow-mindedness of the Russian captive, who concentrated his descriptions almost exclusively on military aspects, should not overshadow the fact that he was one of the few Europeans who walked around the country, at times visiting areas far from the traditional routes of foreign travellers.

In Egypt, the prisoner visited Cairo (Egypt), Bulak, Damietta, Rashid (Rosetta), Aboukir and Alexandria. His *Description* does not mention any ancient monuments, but it gives a good idea of the geographical position of Egyptian cities as well as the heights of Cairo's fortifications. He also noted his scepticism of the ability of the local Arabs to withstand an army equipped with firearms. Yet he admitted the quality of Cairo's defence system and noted the strategic importance of Saladin's fort.

To sum up, there were three identifiable periods in the history of Russian people travelling to Egypt and the Middle East during pre-imperial times:

1) The Establishment of Contacts: 10–13th Centuries

During this first period, which corresponds to the Old Russian state – Kievan Rus – and the most dramatic period of the Tartar yoke, the Russian literate élite drew information on Egypt and its history primarily from Byzantine chronicles and the ancient writings which had begun to penetrate the field of Russian information and historical discourse after the adoption of Christianity at the end of the 10th century.

Sporadically organised travels of Russian people to Egypt, such as the embassy of Duke Vladimir to Egypt and the Middle East, have left no traces in the surviving narrative tradition. The earliest reports of Russian travellers to the Holy Land date back to the 12th century, but these writings do not contain any information on Egypt, although there is evidence that some unpreserved reports did exist and contained descriptions of Sinai.

The Mongol invasion ravaged the disintegrated Russian states and had the effect of slowing down the development of the eastern Slavs. During this time period, there is no known record for the travels of

Russian people to Egypt and the Middle East.

2) The Time of Pilgrims: 14–15th Centuries

Overcoming the devastation caused by the Mongols concurred with the gradual unification of the north-eastern Slavic lands around Moscow and the southwestern Slavs under Lithuania. The political and economic development of the Russian lands resulted in the strengthening of contacts with the Middle East. The first preserved reports of Russian pilgrims who visited Egypt in the course of their travels to the Holy Land are dated to this period. Their descriptions of Egypt were rather laconic, and the narration is dominated by religious content.

3) State Officials and Merchants: Late 15–17th Centuries

The character of this third period was formed by the rapid development of the Muscovite state into a regional power. After the fall of the Byzantine Empire, Moscow began to claim the status of its legal successor and the right for the name of the Third Rome. The development of trade with the Middle East brought Muscovite merchants to Egypt, while the growing concern of Moscow regarding the position of the Christian church in the Ottoman Empire and Russia's territorial expansion to the borders with the Crimean Khanate favoured the need for political and, let's say, reconnaissance missions.

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Hieroglyphs from the North: Newcastle's Early Travellers in Egypt and Their Correspondence with Jean-François Champollion

Margaret Maitland

Europe's long-held fascination with ancient Egypt grew exponentially in the early 19th century with the news of the discoveries made by the Napoleonic expedition and increasing numbers of European travellers to Egypt. While the great capitals, such as Paris and London, were focal points for some of the earliest collections and scholarship, other smaller communities also contributed to the development of our understanding of Egypt's ancient history and language.

Various travellers and collectors from Newcastle-upon-Tyne brought ancient Egypt to the North East of England. In particular, Thomas Coates and John Bowes Wright acquired two sets of mummies and coffins, fuelling local Egyptomania, but they also sought a greater understanding of these objects through their consultation of some of the most acclaimed Egyptological scholars of the day, such as Thomas Young. Most notably, Bowes Wright and his friend Joseph Lamb struck up a friendship with the extraordinary Jean-François Champollion, the decipherer of hieroglyphs. Their relationship likely stemmed from encounters in Paris, a mutual interest in Egypt and shared liberal political beliefs. Their surviving correspondence demonstrates another side to the supposed animosity between the English and French scholars of the day, and offers insights into Champollion's early progress with the ancient Egyptian language.

The last known hieroglyphic inscription was carved on the island of Philae by a priest on 24 August 394 CE, after which the hieroglyphic script was forgotten, and the history of ancient Egypt slipped from understanding. An erroneous belief arose that the script was a purely symbolic system, which only made its enigma even more impenetrable. Over the centuries many scholars struggled to regain what had been lost with little success, from Abū Bakr Aḥmad bin ‘Alī ibn Qays al-Wahshiyyah (9th-10th centuries CE) to Athanasius Kircher (1602–80), but it was not until the rediscovery of the Rosetta Stone that there was any glimmer of hope for decipherment.¹

From the moment of its discovery in 1799 by the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt, the Rosetta Stone’s importance was recognised as ‘a most valuable relic of antiquity, the feeble but only yet discovered link of the Egyptian to the known languages’. It was called worth its ‘weight in diamonds’.² The stone’s importance lay in its trilingual inscription: the same message repeated in hieroglyphs, demotic, and ancient Greek, which was still understood. After the stone’s rediscovery, it was captured by the British Army in 1801 and taken to the British Museum where it has resided ever since (BM EA 24).

Numerous scholars were inspired to try their hands at decipherment, but there were two main rivals in the race. The young French scholar Jean-François Champollion (1790–1832) amassed considerable knowledge of Egyptian culture, studying place names and mastering the Coptic language, but initially made limited advances with the hieroglyphic script itself. At the age of 16, he had presented a paper to the Grenoble Académie arguing, correctly if not originally, that Coptic was the language of ancient Egypt.³ The Englishman Thomas Young (1773–1829), a polymath genius, had managed to translate the cartouche of Ptolemy by 1816, and in an article in 1819, he noted the phonetic components of several cartouches on the Rosetta Stone, but he assumed these were restricted to sounding out foreign names rather than an integral part of the language itself.⁴

In 1821, Champollion read a copy of Thomas Young’s article, and in January 1822, he saw a copy of a publication by William John Bankes (1786–1855) about the obelisk he had brought back to Kingston Lacy from Philae. The obelisk was inscribed in both ancient Greek and hieroglyphs, including the cartouche of Cleopatra, which Bankes had annotated. These two publications may have convinced Champollion to consider further the possibility of a phonetic component to the script.⁵

Champollion’s true breakthrough came when he was sent copies of inscriptions at Abu Simbel by Jean-Nicholas Huyot (1780–1840), a French architect travelling in Egypt with Bankes. Champollion

examined the cartouches and, using his knowledge of the Coptic language, managed to decipher the symbols that wrote the names of Rameses and Thutmose. With this, Champollion finally came to the sudden and electrifying realisation that phonetic symbols were used to write not just foreign names, but also those of native Egyptian rulers, and thus were evidently used throughout the entire hieroglyphic script.⁶

THE RIVALRY

On 27 September 1822, Champollion presented his findings at a lecture at the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres in Paris. However, in the subsequent publication *Lettre à M. Dacier*, Champollion only mentioned Young's article in a minor footnote, and although he discussed the Philae obelisk, he failed to acknowledge Bankes' or Young's work on the monument. Two years later, Champollion would write: 'I ... recognise that [Young] was the first to publish some correct distinctions concerning the general nature of these writings ...', but he rebutted criticisms of plagiarism with the bald claim: 'I must say that in the same period, and without having any knowledge of the opinions of the *M. le docteur* Young, I managed to arrive, by a fairly certain method, at more or less similar results'.⁷

Nevertheless, Richard B. Parkinson argues: 'Even if one allows that Champollion was more familiar with Young's initial work than he subsequently claimed, he is the sole decipherer of the hieroglyphic script: any decipherment stands or falls as a whole, and while Young discovered parts of an alphabet – a key – Champollion unlocked an entire written language'.⁸

However, at the time, there was scepticism and overt criticism from other European scholars who doubted his breakthrough was genuine. There was hostility even in his native France: Champollion was nominated for election to the Académie three times, but was rejected twice before finally being admitted in 1830. However, the greatest resentment lay with the English scholars who had also been working towards decipherment. While the rivals' initial correspondence seems to have been amicable, Young wrote, 'I did certainly expect to find the chronology of my own researches a little more distinctly stated', in his rather pointedly-titled 1823 publication *An Account of Some Recent Discoveries in Hieroglyphical Literature and Egyptian Antiquities: including the Author's Original Alphabet as Extended by Mr. Champollion*.⁹ Bankes was outraged and is said to have thought Champollion 'a dirty scoundrel', and refused to answer a letter from him begging to see a copy of an important king list discovered by Bankes.¹⁰ The British

consul-general and collector Henry Salt (1780–1827) wrote a paper entitled ‘Essay on Dr. Young’s and M. Champollion’s Phonetic System of Hieroglyphics’, in which he admonished Champollion ‘for not informing the public of the sources of his information’, and stated ‘the first discovery of the name Cleopatra is due to Mr. W. J. Bankes, in 1818’.¹¹

Even those Englishmen with whom he was on more friendly terms were not always entirely convinced about his abilities. Lord Prudhoe, who encountered Champollion on his travels in Egypt and Nubia, wrote on 20 January 1829: ‘He has certainly much more knowledge on the subject of hieroglyphics than any man living, but I fear he is not entirely to be trusted. I require conviction where proofs to be obtained are [sic] that letters spell words’.¹² Despite the nationalistic dimension of this rivalry, the city of Newcastle was far removed from the controversy, and following their initial introduction to ancient Egypt and an encounter with Thomas Young, they would eventually strike up a rewarding relationship with Jean-François Champollion.

THOMAS COATES AND THE FIRST NEWCASTLE MUMMY

In the early 19th century, Newcastle-upon-Tyne was home to industrial innovation and a liberal scholarly community, which centred on the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle (Lit & Phil), founded in 1793. The first taste of ancient Egypt to reach Newcastle came in the form of a mummy brought back by Thomas Coates (1775–1828, sometimes spelled ‘Coats’) of Lipwood House, Haydon Bridge.¹³ Coates was an army surgeon in India, who while travelling home overland, visited Egypt in the company of Walter Davidson. Coates bought the mummy in 1820 at Qurna on the Theban West Bank (opposite modern Luxor). He presented it to the Lit & Phil in September 1821, and was made an honorary member.¹⁴

The arrival of the mummy caused quite a stir in Newcastle: ‘To gratify the public curiosity with regard to this curious relic of antiquity, the Secretaries engaged to attend for a fortnight two hours each day, that the members and their friends might be accommodated with its inspection, without the risk of its receiving any damage. The multitudes who sought admission during this period having exceeded all expectation’.¹⁵ The *Newcastle Chronicle* noted that ‘during the few days that it has been open to public inspection, it has been computed that upwards of ten thousand persons have visited the apartment in which this valuable and curious relic of antiquity is deposited’.¹⁶ James Ramsay (1789–1854), a local artist and well-known portrait painter, offered to paint the mummy and produced an unfinished

portrait before his efforts were interrupted by a commission.¹⁷

Quite soon after the mummy's arrival, several local individuals began to petition the Lit & Phil to allow an 'unwrapping'. A letter to the editor of the *Newcastle Magazine* stated:

'If the society have any regard for the example of others, they should open the mummy: for this has been done in Glasgow, in Edinburgh, and in London There is a scientific purpose to be served If the mummy be never opened by the society, to them it will be miser's gold, it will be worthless, it will be useless, and their resolution will be an injury to their posterity There is every probability if the mummy be not opened now, that when some wiser society at a future day, resolve to penetrate farther than their ancestors, they will find but a very unsatisfactory remnant'.¹⁸

At one point, the mummy was carefully removed from and then returned to her painted cartonnage, but she was never actually unwrapped.¹⁹ Exactly why this decision was taken is unknown, but the letter refers to 'a strange idea prevalent on the subject of this opening' that it would destroy it. The letter's author argued that the mummy was not likely to last for very long anyway. In fact, this decision ensured the preservation of the mummy, and modern technology has enabled its non-invasive, non-destructive examination.

The mummy, Bakt-en-Hor (Fig. 9.1), is now held in the collections of the Natural History Society of Northumbria at the Great North Museum: Hancock (NEWHM : AREGYPT605).²⁰ The style of decoration on the cartonnage suggests it dates to the later 22nd Dynasty (c. 825–715 BCE).²¹ The cartonnage and mummy were contained in a separate plain wooden (sycamore) anthropoid coffin, covered with dark resin. In 1964, a radiographic survey of Bakt-en-Hor revealed that she was an adult female measuring 5 ft 2 in (1.57 m). Objects were identified between the wrappings, including several amulets, a winged pectoral, and an embalming plaque. She underwent a full computerised comography (CT) scan at Newcastle General Hospital in 1993, from which it was determined that she had a full set of teeth, no signs of arthritis or bone disease and was estimated to have been between 21 and 35 years of age when she died. The brain had been removed through the nose, while implants, possibly stone, had been placed behind the eyelids, as well as packing material in the mouth and throat.²²

Although the Lit & Phil did not undertake an unwrapping, the committee 'engaged in an extensive correspondence on the subject of the Mummy'.²³ The British hieroglyphic expert of the day, Thomas Young, was consulted about the inscription, as reported in the *Newcastle Magazine* in January 1822:

Dr. Young, whose opinion on these subjects is much to be relied on, has stated that as far as a general examination of the hieroglyphics on this mummy could

inform him, they were nothing more than are usual on almost all cases which enclose mummified personages of considerable rank, consisting chiefly of emblems of the principal Egyptian deities in different states and functions, and being meant, as it would seem, as a mode of invoking or conciliating the goodwill of those divinities to the deceased – somewhat in the nature of letters of credit to the next world. As far as Dr. Y has yet discovered, there does not seem to be anything indicative of the condition of the deceased, except as it seems generally probably that she was a person of some rank.²⁴



Figure 9.1: The cartonnage, mummy, and coffin of Bakt-en-Hor (NEWHM : AREGYPT605). Image courtesy of the Natural History Society of Northumbria, the Great North Museum: Hancock.

Young's rather vague and inconclusive remarks reveal the limits of his understanding, just months before Champollion's breakthrough. The collector Coates himself ventured some of his own interpretations, and apart from a rather bizarre theory that Egypt might have been 'peopled from India', offered some sensible suggestions:

Mr. C suggests, from an examination of other sepulchral monuments by means of the Rosetta stone, that the hieroglyphics may be generally a glorification of Osiris or Isis, as the sex may have been, and an assimilation of the deceased with these deities. He concludes ... by offering to transmit facsimiles of the hieroglyphics on this mummy to Mr. Salt, at Cairo, whose opportunities and zeal would make information from him very valuable.²⁵

Coates' conjectures about the association of the deceased with Osiris clearly demonstrate a reasonable knowledge of ancient Egypt and a remarkably astute recognition of the inscription's possible significance. However, the *Newcastle Magazine* held out little hope for the decipherment of the inscription: 'From the very little that the utmost labour of scientific men has been able up to this time to collect from hieroglyphical [sic] writing, we fear that there is not any likelihood of coming to a speedy explanation of those characters'. Little did they know that a translation of the inscription to a remarkable degree of accuracy would be forthcoming less than two years later.

It was John Bowes Wright (1780–1836) and his friend Joseph Lamb (1781–1859) who eventually helped bring about Champollion's decipherment of the mummy inscription. Lamb was a leading local businessman and an advocate of political reform who became Mayor of Newcastle in 1837.²⁶ Bowes Wright had received a Bachelor's degree in classics and modern languages from Jesus College, Cambridge and was elected to a fellowship there in 1806. His name frequently occurs in Newcastle's local annals of the time in relation to the promotion of civil and religious liberty with the advanced wing of the Whig party.²⁷ Bowes Wright was said to be 'an excellent linguist and enterprising traveller, who traversed several regions of Asia and Africa, everywhere deeply studying men and manners, and scattering, as opportunity offered, the seeds of public liberty, to which he was passionately attached'.²⁸

In 1818–19, Bowes Wright travelled through Egypt and Sudan with another gentleman from Jesus College, William Fischer. A letter from Bowes Wright to Joseph Lamb cites advice that they received from Captain Corry, Lord Belmore's half-brother: 'It is perfectly safe travelling in Egypt and very easy ... Provisions are amazingly cheap, a sheep not costing above a dollar. It is, however, necessary ... to go armed and in Oriental costume and to let your beard grow'. When they first arrived in Egypt, Bowes Wright wrote to Lamb:

'We experienced great hospitality from Mr. Lee, our Consul in Alexandria, and were very much pleased by visiting the antiquities of the ancient city. It is a great pity that the Needle of Cleopatra, which has been thrown down, was not conveyed to England, as once proposed; it would have been an infinitely finer and more interesting monument than anything that will be produced by our modern architects, and under the circumstances much more appropriate'.²⁹

During the course of their journey, they carved their names in graffiti on various ancient monuments: Bowes Wright in the tomb of Paheri at El Kab (RDK 436) and the Nubian temple of Tafa (RDK 570), Fischer at the temple of Debod at Philae (RDK 916) and the kiosk at Qertassi (RDK 571).³⁰

Amongst Bowes Wright's papers, which came into the possession of Lamb, is a 'Plan of the interior of the Temple at Absambuhl (Abu Simbel)', drawn when the temple was first re-opened by Giovanni Belzoni in 1817.³¹ The plan is in the format of a booklet consisting of a single sheet of paper folded in half, within which is a hand-drawn copy of the temple's layout (Fig. 9.2), with the following caption on the cover:

Opened August 1st 1817 – after 22 days labour in clearing away the sand to the depth of 40 feet – the 1st 5 days assisted by about 100 of the Natives, the

remaining 17 – our party consisted of only 6 persons, viz Mess. Beechy and Belzoni, Captn Mangles, Capt Irby, a Turkish soldier, and a Greek servant. The experience of remunerating the Natives was paid by Mr. Salt, His Brit Majesty's Consul Gen in Egypt for whom Mr Belzoni had endeavoured to open it in 1816 also.

Bowes Wright presumably obtained the pamphlet when he later encountered Giovanni Belzoni (1778–1823). Belzoni, the circus strongman-turned-agent of Henry Salt, wrote about meeting Bowes Wright and Fischer in Thebes in January 1819, when they were on their way back from travels in Nubia: 'By this time Mr. Wright and Mr. Fisher arrived in Thebes, on their return from Nubia. I had the pleasure to walk over the remains of old Thebes with these gentlemen, and I must confess, that I felt no small degree of sorrow to quit a place which was become so familiar to me'.³² While Charles Leonard Irby (1789–1845) and James Mangles (1786–1867) do not mention encountering Bowes Wright in their *Travels in Egypt and Nubia*, they nominated him for membership of the Travellers' Club on 14 April 1821, though he was not elected.³³ Wright and Fischer also encountered John Hyde (d. 1825) on their way back up the Nile.³⁴

26th Dynasty (c. 664–525 BCE), are now held in the collections of the Natural History Society of Northumbria at the Great North Museum: Hancock (NEWHM : AREGYPT604). The painted polychrome coffins have been severely darkened by heavy varnishing in the last century or so. However, in 1964, M. F. Laming Macadam was able to read the deceased's name as 'Irterau, daughter of Pedamenope'.³⁷ Unlike Newcastle's first mummy, Irt-irw did not escape the mummy unwrapping mania. On 8 March 1830, she was publicly unwrapped and examined in the lecture room of the Lit & Phil by three local surgeons: Thomas Michael Greenhow, John Baird and Sir John Fife. The process took two hours and the bandages that they removed weighed no less than 50 lb 6 oz, but contained no amulets.³⁸ The Y-shaped incision in her stomach dates from their examination, which revealed that her internal organs and brain were not removed before embalming. The cause of her death was not determined by the 'autopsy', nor by later analysis. On 20 January 1903, Dr William Martin reportedly took two x-rays of the wrists and hands, stating that 'comparison proves the mummy is that of a person over 20 years of age', which agrees with findings from further x-ray studies conducted in 1964, suggesting that she was 'a youngish female adult' when she died.³⁹

THE FIRST CHAMPOLLION LETTER

Bowes Wright clearly met Champollion while he was in Paris, and it seems likely that Lamb may have also. Champollion, who was a passionate republican, would have shared liberal political sympathies and reformist ideals with both Joseph Lamb and John Bowes Wright.⁴⁰ For example, Bowes Wright is mentioned in a later account which notes that a town meeting was organised in Newcastle's Guildhall in response to the July 1830 French revolution, for the purpose of attesting the 'sympathy of Englishmen with the cause of liberty in France'. Bowes Wright 'told the meeting what he saw when he was in Paris'.⁴¹ Aside from politics, Bowes Wright's tales of his travels in Egypt would likely have fascinated Champollion, as they had done in correspondence with the mummy scholar Thomas Joseph Pettigrew (1791–1865).⁴² Few people at that time would have been able to offer Champollion valuable first-hand information about the ancient sites, monuments and antiquities that Wright had visited in Egypt and Nubia. It was not until the summer of 1828 that Champollion was finally able to mount his own expedition to Egypt.

Two letters survive between Champollion and Lamb, one in the original and one in transcription. The letters date to 1823 and 1827

and both include translations from hieroglyphic texts, offering tantalising glimpses into Champollion's progress in decipherment at these points in time. On 31 October 1823, while Lamb was in Paris, he sent a letter to Champollion on behalf of the Lit & Phil, enquiring about the inscription on the cartonnage of Coates' mummy.⁴³ It was just a year after Champollion's first announcement of his breakthrough, so the city must have been buzzing with news of his decipherment. For Champollion, who had not yet been able to achieve his dream of travelling to Egypt, any sources of hieroglyphic texts must have been vital to his continuing progress with the script and language. The inscription on the Great North Museum: Hancock's mummy, Bakt-en-Hor, would have been amongst the earliest hieroglyphic texts translated by Champollion. This first letter only survives in a transcript translated into English, which Champollion began, 'I desire to return to you my sincere thanks for your kindness in presenting me with an exact copy of the inscription on the Egyptian mummy presented to the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle. This inscription contains the usual formula – a prayer addressed to several divinities for the soul of the deceased'.⁴⁴

Between his tentative initial discoveries, published in 1822, and the publication of his *Précis* of Egyptian grammar in 1824, Champollion made great strides in his decipherment, but there is only limited evidence of how his knowledge was developing at this time. The first Newcastle letter indicates that he already had a surprisingly confident grasp of the language, although a great deal of his translations still relied on his intuition and immersion in comparing inscriptions. He identified various gods and titles such as 'Mistress of the House' with relative success, but often struggled with symbols' phonetic values (assigning *hv* to the house-symbol [Gardiner O1] rather than its actual value of *pr*), or avoided assigning them altogether. He seems to have been most comfortable identifying common elements from texts that he had encountered before, such as the offering formula and the placement of the name of the god Osiris before the name of the deceased.

He could generally recognise patterns in how groups of symbols were used, but not always their full meaning. For example, he identified the term *maa-kheru*, stating: 'this group always follows the proper names of the deceased of both sexes, and is a sign of the species'. More specifically this term identifies the deceased as having been judged morally righteous and is now translated as 'true of voice'. Nevertheless, Champollion's progress can be charted through his later work, and sure enough the term is correctly translated in his posthumously published *Grammaire*.⁴⁵

Comparing Champollion's translation of the inscription with one

provided to the museum in 1992 by Dr John Taylor of the British Museum helps facilitate an appraisal of Champollion's abilities in 1823 (note that some of the differences are due to the use of more modern wording).

Champollion's translation:

May she be approved by Phre, the Lord of the Celestial Gods, and by T-M. (Egyptian Mars), Lord of the Worlds. May Osiris, the Supreme Ruler of Amenti (Hades), grant repose to the Osirian Lady, her daughter Tashorpe x x daughter of x x (mother) deceased.

John Taylor's translation:

An offering which the king gives to Re-Harakhty, chief of the gods [to] Atum, lord of the two lands, [and to] Osiris, Foremost of the Westerners, so that he may give offerings and provisions to the Osiris, the Lady of the House, Baketen-her-nakht, daughter of the God's father Nakhtefmut, true of voice.⁴⁶

Champollion struggled most with reading personal names. In the deceased's name, Bakt-en-Hor means 'Servant of the god Horus'. Champollion correctly identified the first two signs as a noun referring to a female person, but he did not recognise the 't' at the end as a feminine ending, and should have read it as 'female servant' rather than a 'mystic title signifying daughter'. Part of the blame must also be laid on the transcriber whose poor efforts in copying one horizontal symbol led Champollion to misidentify the water-sign *n* (Gardiner N35), which stood for the preposition 'of', as a door-bolt *s* (Gardiner O34). While he also clearly understood the phonetic value of certain symbols, Champollion seems perhaps not to have realised that these could be biliteral or trilateral rather than just alphabetic (for example, he reads the sign *Hr* [Gardiner D2] simply as *h* and the sign *pr* [Gardiner O1] as *p*). He had also not yet perceived that signs could function as determinatives (he would not recognise this until his trip to Egypt), so he read the last symbol in the name for its phonetic value rather than as a determinative for the god Horus. Nevertheless, Champollion's understanding of the inscription as a whole is impressively accurate, especially when considering his experience reading texts was in the infancy of its first year.⁴⁷

In the closing of his letter, Champollion is unassuming about his abilities, and demonstrates respect and warmth towards Lamb. His use of the word 'renew' suggests prior acquaintance:

This, Sir, is all that it is possible to advance with certainty upon the legend which you had the goodness to send me. I hope that these ideas, collected in haste, will satisfy you. I seize this occasion to renew the expression of the distinguished sentiments with which I have the honor to be, Sir,

The letter was read out at a meeting of the Literary & Philosophical Society of Newcastle on 6 January 1824. However, the translation was reported rather differently outside Newcastle; its publication in an article in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of London was accompanied by the statement: 'Dr. Young in this country, and M. Champollion in France, have been able to decipher many of the paintings on the Egyptian antiquities'.⁴⁸ While Champollion may not always have given Young due credit, the English press were not above failing to properly acknowledge Champollion.

THE SECOND CHAMPOLLION LETTER

The second letter (Figs 9.3 and 9.4) survives in the original and remains in the possession of the Natural History Society of Northumbria, to whom ownership passed from the Lit & Phil when the mummies were transferred along with the natural history collections. The letter, addressed to the Secretary of the Society of Newcastle, is dated from Paris 18 July 1827.⁴⁹ The subject of this letter is much more mysterious than that of the first. After Champollion's return to Paris from Italy, he found a drawing of a stela waiting for him, but the accompanying letter had been mislaid. Champollion writes: 'A conversation which I had with Mr Wright has convinced me that this drawing may have come from the learned Society of Newcastle; and I seize with eagerness the opportunity which Mr Wright is pleased to give me of returning it, accompanied by an explanatory notice, as much detailed as my own knowledge, and the clearness of the drawing, would permit'.

Unfortunately, we cannot be sure whether Champollion and Bowes Wright were correct in their assumptions about the origin of the drawing. There are no inscribed stelae that meet the description of the one referred to in the letter, either in the Newcastle collections, or in the collections of the Duke of Northumberland, now housed in the Durham Oriental Museum. Hopefully, further enquiries may yet identify it elsewhere. The stela, probably dated to the late 18th Dynasty, was inscribed with short sun hymns, an offering formula, and a depiction of the god Osiris seated beneath a grapevine, as well as deceased family members.

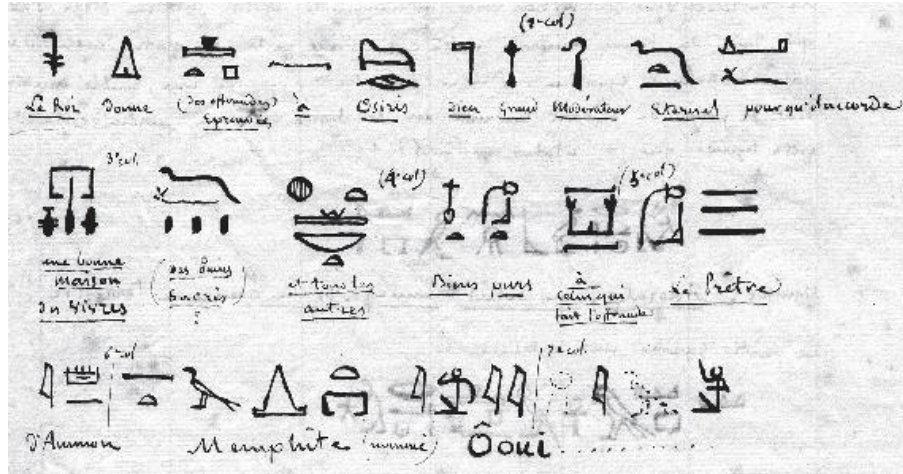


Figure 9.3: Transcription and translation of an offering formula in the second Newcastle letter from Jean-François Champollion. Image courtesy of the Natural History Society of Northumbria, the Great North Museum: Hancock.

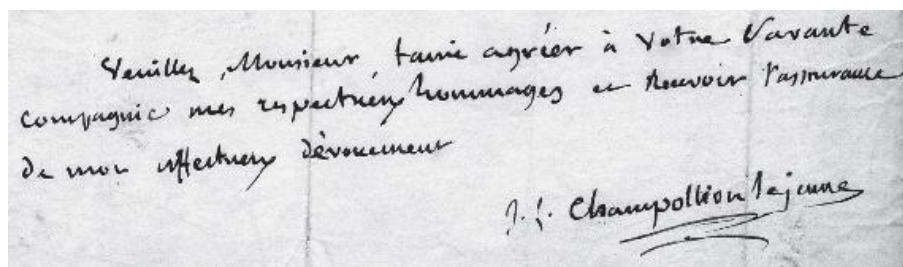


Figure 9.4: Closing words from the second Newcastle letter from Jean-François Champollion. Image courtesy of the Natural History Society of Northumbria, the Great North Museum: Hancock.

Champollion's interpretation of the stela itself demonstrates impressive insight and analysis. For example, he correctly identifies the form of the stela as imitating that of an Egyptian door (a false door symbolised a point of communication between this world and the next). However, he also exhibits a preoccupation symptomatic of the time with exaggerating the Egyptian interest in the celestial realm, identifying two jackals as symbols of the solstices rather than protective funerary deities. As with the first letter, he also explains Egyptian concepts by comparing them to ancient Greek and Roman models, and perhaps not entirely accurately, for example, equating the god Osiris with the god Bacchus. When Champollion eventually achieved his dream of travelling to Egypt, he would finally get a better sense of the cultural context and belief system in which these texts were produced.

Nevertheless, comparing the two letters demonstrates the considerable progress that he made in just a few years. Four years

earlier, he had not translated the opening of the offering formula on the mummy cartonnage, but with the same formula on the stela, he offers a full breakdown and a relatively clear understanding of its meaning. However, he still frequently failed to recognise the phonetic values of signs that he saw as purely symbolic, or to realise that they could have dual functions as both ideograms and sound symbols. For example, the house symbol [Gardiner O1] was easily mistaken by Champollion as representing a house for the afterlife, but in the offering formula it has a different function as the phonetic value *pr* in the term *pṛt-hrw* ‘sending forth the voice’, referring to invocation offerings.

Clearly the decipherment of hieroglyphs cannot be characterised as simply a single eureka moment from Champollion. As Richard Parkinson has stated, ‘the decipherment of the Egyptian scripts is not a single event that occurred in 1822. but is a continuous process that is repeated at every reading of a text or artefact. Like any process of reading, it is a dialogue’.⁵⁰

Again, Champollion closes this second letter with humble and earnestly respectful words, writing:

Be pleased, Sir, to present to your Learned Body my respectful homage, and to receive the assurance of my sincere devotion.

J. F. Champollion le jeune

Champollion’s warm correspondence with the Newcastle scholars provides evidence of a collegial relationship, and offers a different perspective to the popular narrative of ‘the usual rivalry and animosity between the British and the French’.⁵¹ The antagonism between the English and French scholars of Egyptology was not purely nationalistic. Whether Champollion would have been quite so kindly in his correspondence if he knew that Newcastle had first consulted his rival Thomas Young is another matter.

Newcastle’s travellers and their collections offered their contributions to investigating ancient Egypt, but Champollion’s legacy provided the key to understanding the entire civilisation. The Newcastle letters offer insights into both Champollion’s character and the genius of his decipherment – his ‘calling card to posterity’.⁵²

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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and provided invaluable knowledge of local history. Thanks also to Andrew Parkin, Keeper of Archaeology at the Great North Museum: Hancock, and my other former colleagues and staff at Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums; James Littlewood and the Natural History Society of Northumbria; the British Museum Future Curators programme, an HLF Skills for the Future funded programme, during which I carried out the majority of my research; Henrietta Lidchi, Ross Irving, and my colleagues at National Museums Scotland; staff at the Literary & Philosophical Society of Newcastle; and staff at the Northumberland Archives. Special thanks to John Taylor at the British Museum, who previously provided the Hancock Museum with a translation of the cartonnage inscription, to Robert Morkot, who kindly brought to my attention Bowes Wright's mention in the John Hyde journals and his nomination at the Travellers' Club, to John Baines and Richard B. Parkinson, and to Marie Vandenbeusch for looking over my translations from the French, though all errors remain my own.

Notes

- 1 R. Parkinson (1999) *Cracking Codes: The Rosetta Stone and Decipherment*, London, pp. 14–16, 178; R. B. Parkinson (2005) *The Rosetta Stone*, London, pp. 20–23.
- 2 Parkinson, *Cracking Codes*, pp. 19–20.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 32.
- 4 T. Young (1816) 'Additional Letters relating to the Inscription of Rosetta', *Museum Criticum* 7; 'Egypt', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, suppl. vol. 4, part 1, Edinburgh 1819.
- 5 Parkinson, *Cracking Codes*, pp. 32–5; P. Usick (2002) *Adventures in Egypt and Nubia: The Travels of William John Bankes (1786–1855)*, London, pp. 78–79, 154; A. Robinson (2012) *Cracking the Egyptian Code: the Revolutionary Life of Jean-François Champollion*, London, pp. 118–23, 133–36.
- 6 Parkinson, *Cracking Codes*, p. 35; *Rosetta Stone*, p. 39.
- 7 Robinson, *Champollion*, pp. 132–33.
- 8 Parkinson, *Cracking Codes*, p. 40.
- 9 T. Young (1823) *An Account of Some Recent Discoveries in Hieroglyphical Literature, and Egyptian Antiquities: including the Author's Original Alphabet as Extended by Mr. Champollion, with a Translation of Five Unpublished Greek and Egyptian Manuscripts*, London, p. 43; Robinson, *Champollion*, pp. 142–44.
- 10 T. Young in J. Leitch (ed.) (1855) *Miscellaneous Works of the Late Thomas Young*, vol. 3, London, p. 371; Parkinson, *Cracking Codes*, p. 39.
- 11 H. Salt (1825) *Essay on Dr. Young's and M. Champollion's Phonetic System of Hieroglyphics*, London, p. 7; Usick, *Bankes*, p. 79.
- 12 Alnwick Archive PN I, 20 January [1829]: J. Ruffle, 'The Journeys of Lord Prudhoe and Major Orlando Felix in Egypt, Nubia and the Levant 1826–1829' in P. and J. Starkey (eds) (1998) *Travellers in Egypt*, London, p. 77.
- 13 M. L. Bierbrier (2012) *Who Was Who in Egyptology*, London, p. 127; W. Lee (1876) *Historical Notes of Haydon Bridge*, Hexham, pp. 30–31; D. G. Crawford (1930) *Roll of the Indian Medical Service 1615–1930*, London, p. 419.
- 14 'The Egyptian Mummy, Lately Presented to the Literary and Philosophical

- Society of Newcastle', *The Newcastle Magazine*, January 1822, pp. 36–41; see also the *Tyne Mercury*, October 1821.
- 15 R. S. Watson (1897) *The History of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne 1793–1896*, Newcastle, p. 300.
 - 16 E. Mackenzie (1827) *A Descriptive and Historical Account of the Town and County of Newcastle upon Tyne, including the Borough of Gateshead*, vol. 1, Newcastle, p. 474; D. Gange (2013) *Dialogues with the Dead: Egyptology in British Culture and Religion, 1822–1922*, Oxford, pp. 68–70.
 - 17 Watson, *History*, pp. 300–1.
 - 18 'Reasons for Opening the Mummy Belonging to the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle', *The Newcastle Magazine*, March 1822, pp. 152–54.
 - 19 Literary & Philosophical Society of Newcastle, 'Minute of the subcommittee appointed to take the mummy out of the coffin', 22 October, 1821; 'The Egyptian Mummy', pp. 37–38; P. Gray (1967) 'Two Mummies of Ancient Egyptians in the Hancock Museum, Newcastle', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 53, pp. 77–78.
 - 20 When the Hancock Museum opened in 1884, the Natural History Society of Northumbria purchased the collections of the 'Newcastle Museum' at the Lit & Phil.
 - 21 Style 2C with type 2 funerary cones, from J. H. Taylor, 'Theban Coffins from the Twenty-Second to the Twenty-Sixth Dynasty: Dating and the Synthesis of Development' in N. Strudwick and J. H. Taylor (eds) (2003) *The Theban Necropolis: Past Present and Future*, London, pp. 101, 106–7.
 - 22 Gray, 'Two Mummies', pp. 77–8, plates 15–16; E. J. Watson and M. Myers (1993) 'The Mummy of Baket-en-Her-Nakht in the Hancock Museum: a Radiological Update', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 79.
 - 23 Watson, *History*, p. 300.
 - 24 'The Egyptian Mummy', pp. 37–38; see also G. T. Fox (1827) *Synopsis of the Newcastle Museum, Late the Allan, Formerly the Tunstall, or Wycliffe Museum*, Newcastle, pp. 251, 303.
 - 25 'The Egyptian Mummy', p. 39.
 - 26 Northumberland Archives, NRO 02659/1–100: Lamb's father, Joseph Lamb (1732–1800), had come from Cumberland to Newcastle in the latter half of the 18th century and established at Ryton Hall. His business interests passed to his three sons when he died, including collieries at Cramlington, the Tyne Bank, and the Northumberland Glass Works at Lemington.
 - 27 Bierbrier, *Who Was Who*, p. 589–90; R. Welford (1895) *Men of Mark 'Twixt Tyne and Tweed*, vol. 3, London, p. 686; Watson, *History*, p. 304; J. A Venn (ed.) (1954) *Alumni Cantabrigienses from the Earliest Times to 1900*, part 2, vol. 6, Cambridge, p. 594. Bowes Wright was the second son of John Wright, an attorney in North Shields. When not travelling abroad, he resided at Lincoln's Inn in London and in Queen's Square, Newcastle, where he eventually died in 1836, and was buried at Tynemouth Priory.
 - 28 W. Brockie (1857) *The Family Names of the Folks of Shields Traced to Their Origin, with Brief Notices of Distinguished Persons*, South Shields, p. 83.
 - 29 D. Manley, 'Letters to a Friend', *Bulletin of ASTENE* 7, April 1999, p. 19; D. Manley, 'Lord Belmore Proceeds Up the Nile in 1817–1818' in P. and J. Starkey (eds) (2001) *Unfolding the Orient: Travellers in Egypt and the Near East*, Reading, p. 191, n. 37.
 - 30 R. O. De Keersmaecker (2001–5) *Travellers' Graffiti from Egypt and the Sudan*, Antwerp.
 - 31 Northumberland Archives NRO 02659/43 Lamb Family of Newcastle upon Tyne: Records: 'Plan of the interior of the Temple at Absambuhl'. NRO

- 02659/44 is an itinerary of Bowes Wright's journey from Alexandria to Cairo and from Cairo to Jaffa. Other John Bowes Wright papers received by Lamb (NRO 02659/41–50) include his certificate of admission to a fellowship at Jesus College, Cambridge in 1806, and a proposed itinerary through Italy in 1822 with J. B. Maude and a guide, Luigi Tommasino.
- 32 G. Belzoni (1820) *Narrative of the Operations and Recent Discoveries within the Pyramids, Temples, Tombs, and Excavations, in Egypt and Nubia*, London, p. 372.
 - 33 Travellers' Club Archives 0453/450.
 - 34 British Library, Add MS 42102: on 20 January 1819, John Hyde wrote that he had left Girgeh 'about noon this day and after having sailed about two hours arrived at Samalar on west side of river, at this place I met a Cangia returning to G[rand] Cairo from Upper Egypt, it had on board Mr. Fisher + Mr Wright (two Gentn. of [Jesus] Col. Camb.) who had been of Cap.n Ducanes party but didn't like to accompany him beyond Philæ'.
 - 35 Denon sale lots nos. 241–43; Jannier sale lot no. 125: Musée du Louvre (1999) *Dominique-Vivant Denon: L'Oeil de Napoléon*, Paris, pp. 402, 403, 410–11; Watson, *History*, p. 304; Bowes Wright reportedly also donated 'a mummy of the sacred Ibis in a glass case'.
 - 36 Watson, *History*, p. 301.
 - 37 Gray, 'Two Mummies', p. 76.
 - 38 *The Newcastle Courant*, 13 March 1830; 20 March 1830; *Tyne Mercury* 16 March 1830; J. Sykes, *Local Records; or Historical Register of Remarkable Events, which have occurred in Northumberland and Durham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and Berwick-upon-Tweed*, vol. 2, Newcastle 1866 [1833], p. 274.
 - 39 Gray, 'Two Mummies', pp. 75–77.
 - 40 E.g. H. Hartleben (1983 [1906]) *Jean-François Champollion: Sa Vie et Son Oeuvre 1790–1832*, Paris, pp. 41, 146–69, 182–90; Robinson, *Champollion*, pp. 39–40, 79, 105–6, 124–6.
 - 41 *The Monthly Chronicle of North Country Lore and Legend* 5 (47), January 1891, p. 13; Welford, *Men of Mark*, vol. 2, p. 229.
 - 42 T. J. Pettigrew (1840) 'Thomas Joseph Pettigrew, F.R.S. F.S.A F.L.S.', *Medical Portrait Gallery: Biographical Memoirs of the Most Celebrated Physicians, Surgeons*, vol. 4, London, p. 31.
 - 43 Lamb wrote from the address Rue Lepelletier, No 6, Pecs le nouvel Opera, Paris.
 - 44 A translation of the letter by Mr. J. Bruce, was published in 'The Hieroglyphics on the Egyptian Mummy, Belonging to the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle, deciphered', *The Newcastle Magazine*, February 1824, pp. 92–93; see also Fox, *Synopsis*, p. 303.
 - 45 J. F. Champollion (1936) *Grammaire Egyptienne*, Paris, pp. 128–29.
 - 46 Watson and Myers, 'Baket-en-her-nakht', p. 180.
 - 47 Unfortunately, despite Champollion's decipherment of the cartonnage inscription, the mummies in Newcastle continued to be seen as objects of curiosity: 'We were always told with charming vagueness that this withered, weird, brown specimen of humanity was none other than Pharaoh's daughter, and for us then, and perhaps even now, there was but one Pharaoh and one daughter. Those were the very arms which lifted little Moses out of the ark of bulrushes' (Watson, *History*, p. 299).
 - 48 *The Gentleman's Magazine*, January 1924, p. 68.
 - 49 M. Maitland, 'The Newcastle Letters of Jean-François Champollion', in preparation.
 - 50 Parkinson, *Cracking Codes*, p. 195.
 - 51 Usick, *Bankes*, p. 77. Notably Sir William Gell (1777–1836) had a very friendly

relationship with Champollion: H. R. Hall, 'Letters of Champollion le Jeune and of Seffarth to Sir William Gell', *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 2 (2), April 1915, pp. 76–7, 79–86.

- 52 Champollion, *Grammaire*, p. 4; Parkinson, *Cracking Codes*, p. 40.

Amalia Sola Nizzoli (1805–45/49), Archaeologist *ante litteram* in Egypt and the Origins of the Third Nizzoli Collection

Daniela Picchi

In recent years, the Egyptian Department of the Archaeological Museum of Bologna¹ has launched its Archive Project. In-depth archival research commenced with the aim of identifying the actual number and nature of the Egyptian objects belonging to each of the different collections that were donated to the city of Bologna from the end of the 16th century up to the opening of the museum in 1881; when and whence these antiquities arrived in Bologna – whether from other Italian or European collections, from excavations in Rome and the surrounding area or directly from Egypt – and who were the protagonists of this collection put together over a century ago.

This impressive research project is still a work in progress, but the numerous documents, traced from Cairo to Copenhagen and mostly unpublished, have yielded a fairly detailed reconstruction of the whole Bolognese collection² and, in particular, of the nucleus collection of Pelagio Palagi, which the city of Bologna acquired via a bequest in 1861, and whose arrival in the city contributed to the opening of the Archaeological Museum in Palazzo Galvani.

Prassede Amalia Maria Sola, more commonly known as Amalia Sola Nizzoli or Amalia Nizzoli was an undisputed principal protagonist of this 19th-century collection. The most recent, and on-going, archival and archaeological research has led to a reconsideration of her Egyptian experience and reveals the important role she played in creating the Palagi collection.

Pelagio Palagi (1775–1860), one of the Italian artists most open to the various influences of Neo-classical and Romantic cultures,³ put together his collection of 3,109 Egyptian antiquities in the first half of the 19th century.⁴ Palagi displayed his interest in Ancient Egypt in Milan, where he lived from 1815 to 1832 and where he created his personal museum.⁵ Palagi continued to enrich his museum even after King Carlo Alberto of Savoy called him to Turin, where he died in 1860.

Beginning in 1824 or 1825, Palagi purchased several Egyptian artefacts from wealthy Venetian families, who were breaking up and selling their collections after the Austrians had occupied the Serenissima in 1798. Lists of the most important of these antiquities mention a wall fragment from the Memphite tomb of Ramessemperra (MCABo EG 1913),⁶ dating from the time of Rameses II, and an almost life-size statue of the ‘overseer of the southern gate’, Uahibra (MCABo EG 1820),⁷ both items formerly belonging to the Nani of San Trovaso Collection as well as a statue of an anonymous figure (MCABo EG 1824),⁸ probably from a workshop in Heliopolis, and a statue representing three guardian deities attributed to the Theban tomb of the ‘Prince of the town’ Montuemhat (MCABo EG 347),⁹ that came from the Palazzo Grimaldi Museum.

In addition to these Venetian antiquities, which arrived in Italy prior to the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt, Palagi obtained a large part of his collection from Giuseppe Nizzoli, Chancellor at the Austrian Consulate in Egypt from 1818 to 1828.¹⁰ The first contact between Nizzoli and Palagi appears to date back to 1823–24. During that time, Nizzoli was trying to sell his second Egyptian collection and initiated some negotiations with Gaetano Cattaneo,¹¹ the curator of the Coin Cabinet of Milan, and a great friend of Palagi. When the Austrian government denied permission for him to buy these antiquities,¹² Cattaneo passed the deal on to Palagi, who received a catalogue of the Nizzoli collection sale.¹³ As is well known, the second Nizzoli collection was purchased by Leopold II, the Grand Duke of Tuscany in 1824.¹⁴ On 3 June 1831, in fact, Palagi acquired the third Nizzoli collection, signing the purchase contract in Milan,¹⁵ and by the end of 1832, he had also bought the remaining part of it,¹⁶ consisting of the objects stored in Nizzoli’s house.¹⁷ A number of these antiquities had been offered to the Grand Duke of Tuscany in the summer of 1826 through the mediation of Simone Luigi Peruzzi¹⁸ but, despite the intentions of Nizzoli, there is no proof of an actual negotiation with Leopold II and, in any case, this negotiation did not reach a successful conclusion.

Giuseppe Nizzoli put together his third collection of Egyptian antiquities between 1824 and 1828, from purchases and exchanges in

Cairo's antiquities market as well as from excavations, including those carried out in Saqqara between April and May 1826 by Amalia Sola, a young Italian woman who was married to Nizzoli by proxy in 1820, and even though she was not unfamiliar with such trading activity, Amalia's contribution to creating this collection makes it special.

THE EGYPTIAN ADVENTURE OF AMALIA SOLA NIZZOLI

Amalia Sola Nizzoli is usually considered a traveller in Egypt, but this definition is at the very least incomplete, if not wrong.¹⁹ It is probably more correct to consider Amalia as the first female *ante litteram* archaeologist in Egypt, where she had arrived in the early 19th century together with her family. The Egyptian adventures of Amalia had a very dramatic beginning. In 1819, an unexpected decision on the part of her father, a relative of Filiberto Marucchi, doctor to the Defterdar Bey at Assiut, forced this young girl – then only 14 years old – to abandon her beloved Tuscany for Egypt. The change of circumstances understandably disoriented Amalia, for she had no knowledge of the country, whose landscape, climate, language, customs and habits were often different from those she had been used to in Italy.

Amalia described her change of lifestyle and her stay in Egypt from 1819 to 1828 in a diary entitled *Memorie sull'Egitto e specialmente sui costumi delle donne orientali e gli harem, scritte durante il suo soggiorno in quel paese (1819–1828)* that was published in Milan in 1841, many years after her experiences in Egypt, with omissions or additions declared in the preface.²⁰

Despite the time that had passed since her stay in Egypt, the first pages of Amalia's diary still manage to portray a vivid memory of her traumatic arrival in Alexandria. At that time, she revealed herself to be an emotionally reactive observer, unable to accept the reality of her surroundings. Her hostility to Egypt lasted as long as the 500 km journey from Alexandria to Assiut, where her uncle Filiberto Marucchi lived. The charm of the ancient ruins of Alexandria, the striking journey into the desert to Rosetta, the view of the pyramids at Giza, the expectations of Gran Cairo (Al-Qahirah) and the journey along the Nile did nothing to diminish her despair.

She continued to feel the same for the next eight months, during which she lived in the harem of the Defterdar Bey, where she was forced to get used to the customs of Arab women, and lived an isolated existence, having to cover up on her rare public appearances. This first phase of her life in Egypt was brought to an end when she refused to marry an older friend of her uncle, a certain Paolo

d'Andrea, and then soon after accepted an arranged marriage with Giuseppe Nizzoli, whom she had met only once in Alexandria a few days after her arrival in Egypt.

This arrangement allowed Amalia to escape from a situation of almost total isolation and become part of the wealthy European set in Alexandria and Cairo with a man who would actually prove to be a loving husband. From then on, as her diary shows, Amalia felt more confident and satisfied with her life in Egypt.

Nizzoli's great interest in Egyptian antiquities was immediately taken up by his young wife. In many pages of her diary, Amalia talks about this topic, demonstrating her knowledge of her husband's affairs, of the archaeological situation in the country and of the Europeans interested in it, whom she does not hesitate to criticise or even to make fun of. When Nizzoli moved to Italy from 1822 to 1824 because of a temporary suspension from work for health reasons and in order to sell his second Egyptian collection, Amalia followed him. Thanks to her account, we know many details about the difficulties of transport and the attempts to sell this remarkable collection of Egyptian antiquities (1,400 pieces), which were partly purchased and partly found in the various excavations Nizzoli conducted in Memphis and elsewhere. It is interesting that Amalia mentions the negotiations with the Grand Duke of Tuscany, but is silent over those with Gaetano Cattaneo in Milan, probably due to the eventual failure of the deal. It should be remembered that Amalia knowingly omitted some details of her and Nizzoli's life as she herself states in the preface of her diary.

After a few years of marriage and the birth of their daughter Elisa in Italy, Amalia appears to have taken on a forceful role in the marriage, resulting in her working alongside or replacing her husband in the search for new antiquities. Between April and May 1826, Amalia oversaw some of the excavations in the Memphite necropolis of Saqqara, while Nizzoli was busy in Cairo.²¹ Her social position, her assimilation into both the European and Turkish social groups, in addition to her perfect knowledge of Arabic (unlike Nizzoli), guaranteed Amalia a unique autonomy over her actions and thoughts in the field of archaeology, especially when one considers that she was a woman in Egypt at the beginning of the 19th century.

Living on the fringes of the desert with Elisa, a maid from Livorno, the Moor Ristam, a cook and a boy to look after the donkey, who led her to the excavations every morning, Amalia finally freed herself from the confines of the Egyptian harem and became part of a world devoid of scruples, that was usually reserved for men. Her rivals on the field were the agents of Henry Salt, Bernardino Drovetti and Giovanni d'Anastasi, with whom she fought constantly.

For about 40 days, she was the *Mudir* of 30 or 40 workmen, divided

into two teams and under the command of two overseers. The workers were paid half or three quarters of a piastre, while the overseers received two piastres per day, unless they found some important antiquities, for which Amalia had to pay an extra *bakshish*. Even the village chief of Saqqara demanded a *bakshish* to loan his workers to the highest bidder amongst the European agents operating in Saqqara. In brief, Amalia conducted a continuous bazaar with all of them, at the same time taking care of her daughter, visiting the entire site of Saqqara and its surroundings, checking that the antiquities discovered were not offered to others – despite this, some objects in her possession were purchased by the abovementioned agents – and even buying antiquities from other excavations. Surface surveys and excavations up to 8–10 feet deep in different areas of the necropolis, from south to north, resulted in her finding different kinds of archaeological items – among which was a heavy and unmovable stone coffin – most of them dating to the New Kingdom or the Late Period.

Even though in her diary she defines the Saqqara experience as a pastime, in every way Amalia may be considered a pioneer in archaeology, and she was very likely responsible for the discovery of some of the masterpieces offered to King Leopold II of Tuscany in the summer of 1826, which were published in the volume *Catalogo Detagliato della Raccolta di Antichità Egizie riunite da G. Nizzoli Cancelliere del Cons. Gen. d'Austria in Egitto dopo quella del 1824* in 1827²² and finally sold to Palagi in 1831.

Selecting the objects listed in the Nizzoli catalogue on the basis of their certain provenance from Saqqara, it is possible to identify at least a few of these masterpieces, the first being the relief of Nubian prisoners from the inner courtyard of the tomb of Horemheb (MCABo EG 1869 = 1887; Fig. 10.1).²³ This tomb, in the south-east area of Saqqara, must have been found during Amalia's time there, given that many other wall fragments, always from its inner courtyard and, in particular, from the south wall, were offered for sale by Giovanni d'Anastasi in 1827 and purchased by King William I of The Netherlands in 1828.²⁴ The list continues with the stele of Ptahpatener (MCABo EG 1906; Fig. 10.2),²⁵ a priest devoted to Horemheb's cult; the wall pillar from the tomb of Ptahemwia (MCABo EG 1891; Fig. 10.3),²⁶ royal butler of Tutankhamun; and three Coptic stele from Apa Jeremiah's Monastery (MCABo EG 3429–1431; Fig. 10.4), which surely come from the same south-east area of Saqqara, even though it is impossible to establish whether they were found still *in situ* or had been reused somewhere in the surrounding area. Other antiquities – for example, a wonderful wall fragment with the weighing of Horemheb's heart (MCABo EG 1944),²⁷ or two wall fragments with the

Goddess Renenutet (MCABo EG 1912)²⁸ and a daily life scene in the marshes (MCABo EG 1890)²⁹ may be generically attributed to Saqqara, and the list could continue.

Amalia's words also leave no doubt about the Saqqara provenance of many small *funeralia*, human and animal mummies and bronzes, which are not identifiable nowadays in the Bolognese collection, but which are certainly present in large numbers in the more than one thousand objects sold by Nizzoli to Palagi. Their provenance is less certain, but at least some of them may have come from the northern or eastern areas of Saqqara, where the animal necropolis are located.

After about 40 days, Amalia ended her short but intense season at Saqqara, having excavated many artefacts and, above all, earning a place in the history of Egyptology.

Her husband continued to collect Egyptian antiquities until the end of their stay in Egypt, some of which are not included in the catalogue published in 1827, but are briefly listed in handwritten notes at the bottom of two copies of the catalogue used by Nizzoli and Palagi as inventories for the sale in 1831,³⁰ and in the manuscript entitled '*Nota degli oggetti di antichità ceduti all'Ill. mo Sig. Professore Pelagio Palagi crescenti dal catalogo a stampa*'.³¹

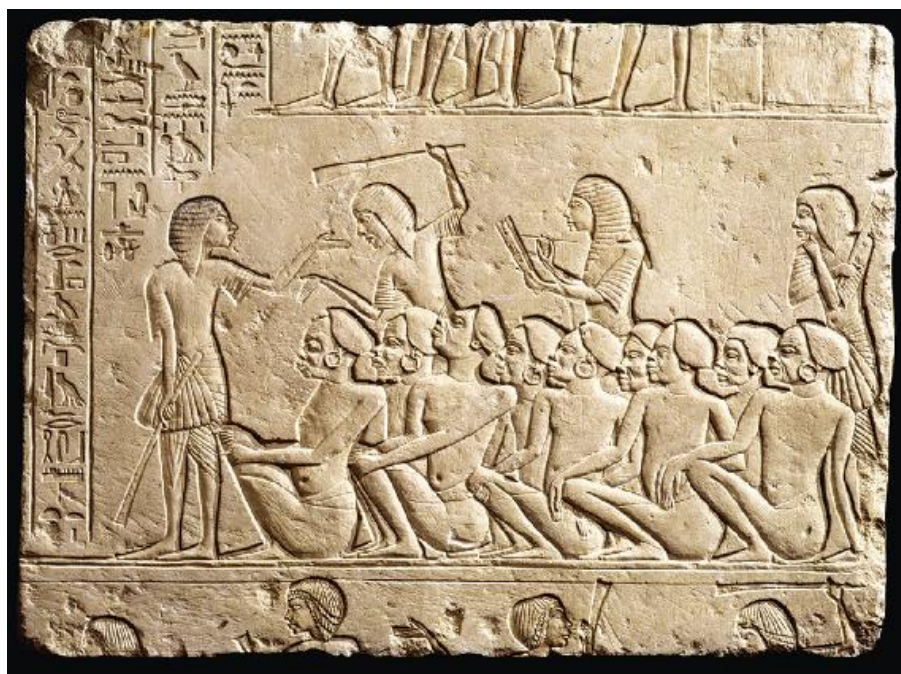


Figure 10.1: Relief with Nubian prisoners from the inner courtyard of Horemheb's tomb at Saqqara. Courtesy of the Archaeological Museum of Bologna.

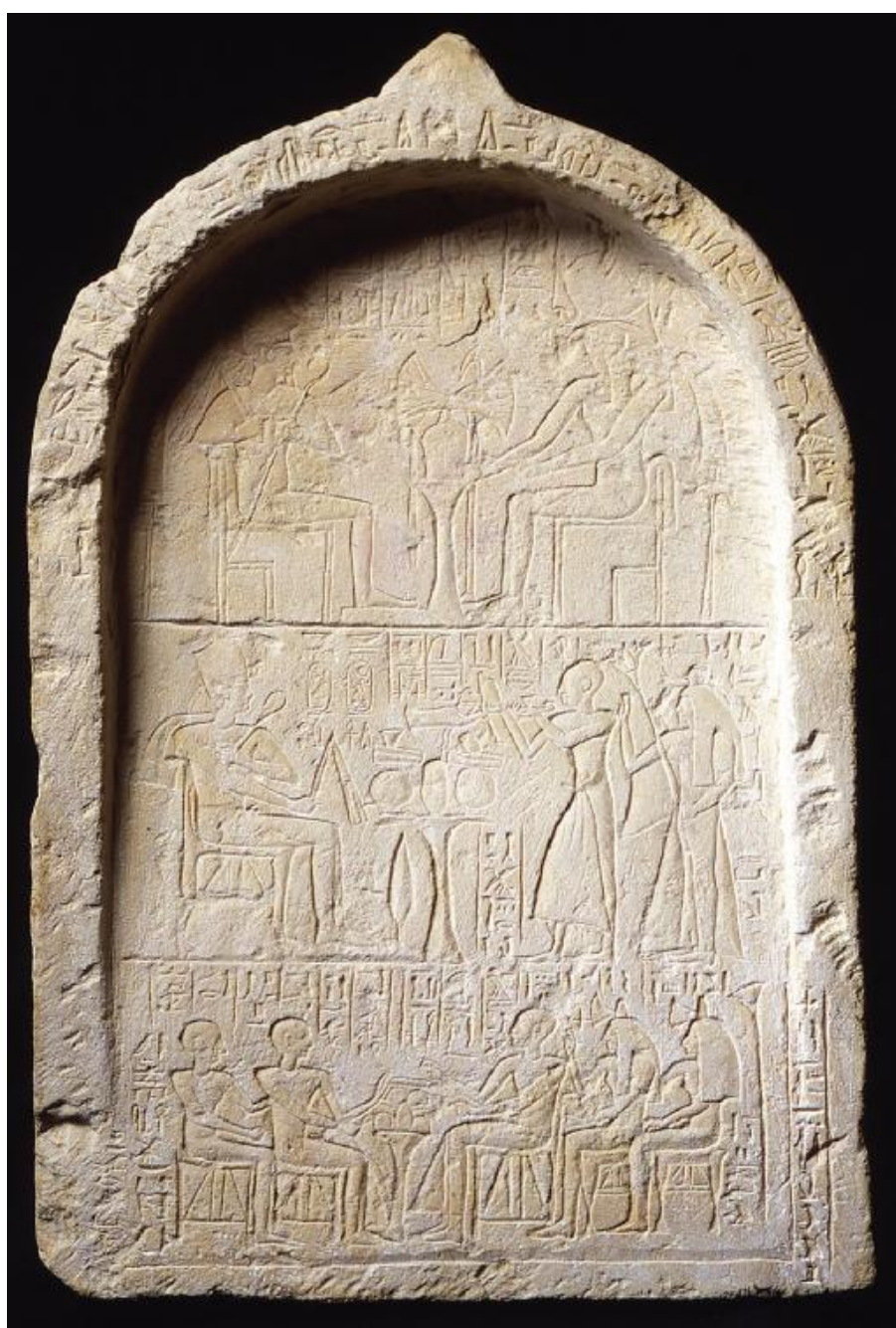


Figure 10.2: Stele of Ptahpatener from Saqqara. Courtesy of the Archaeological Museum of Bologna.

In the meantime, Nizzoli's diplomatic career was doomed following the arrival in Egypt during 1826 of the new Austrian consul, Giuseppe Acerbi,³² who in 1827 accused him of improper accounting. Amalia was always at his side and did not mention this situation in her diary

in order to protect him. In his turn, Nizzoli reciprocated the courtesy and celebrated the memory of his wife, narrating her archaeological experience together with those of many other travellers, adventurers and *ante litteram* archaeologists in the essay entitled '*Le piramidi d'Egitto: osservazioni di Giuseppe Nizzoli in relazione ad un articolo inserito nell'appendice dell'osservatore Triestino N. 61 del 1845*', published a few years after Amalia's diary and immediately before her death.

The Archaeological Museum of Bologna owes much to this curious and intelligent woman, whose memory it keeps alive not just through its archival researches, but especially thanks to the 2011 agreement with the National Museum of Antiquities of Leiden and the participation of Bologna in the Dutch mission to Saqqara.³³ In the name of Amalia, the first Bologna-Leiden joint project was carried out in February 2013 with the placement in-situ of the copies of the wall fragment with Nubian prisoners from Horemheb's tomb and the wall pillar from the Ptahemwia's tomb that were very probably discovered by her. Consequently, her name can be now associated with the archaeological site management of the south-east area of Saqqara begun by G. T. Martin in the 1980s and then continued by M. Raven.³⁴ This is Bologna's personal thanks to Amalia.



Figure 10.3: Wall pillar from Ptahemwia's tomb at Saqqara. Courtesy of the Archaeological Museum of Bologna.

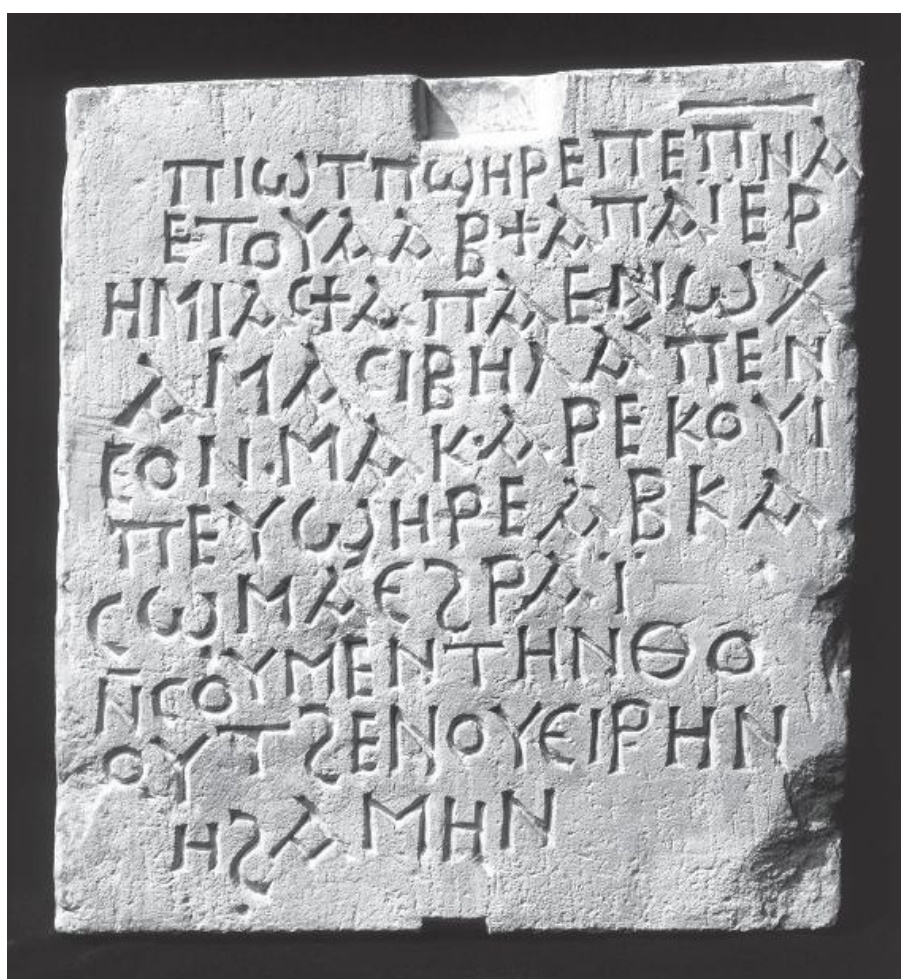


Figure 10.4: Stele of Kui from Apa Jeremiah's Monastery at Saqqara. Courtesy of the Archaeological Museum of Bologna.

Notes

- 1 The Egyptian collection of the Archaeological Museum of Bologna is one of the most important in Italy and it is also relevant at European level for the number, historical value and conservation status of its approximately 4000 objects. Cf. Kminek-Szedlo 1895; Pernigotti 1980 and 1994; Bresciani 1985; Jaeger 1993.
- 2 Picchi, 2004a, 2004b, 2010, 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015.
- 3 Bologna celebrated Pelagio Palagi in his dual rôle of 'artist' and 'collector' by means of an important temporary exhibitions and publications. Cf. Bologna 1976; Poppi 1996; Bernardini 2004; and Bernardino, Matteucci, Mampieri 2007.
- 4 Picchi, 2009, 2011a and 2012.
- 5 Picchi, 2006, in particular 181–83, figs 3–4.
- 6 Driuzzo 1815, n. 357; Kminek-Szedlo 1895, n. 1913; Picchi, 2009, in particular 38, plate XVII, fig. 2 and plate XVIII, fig. 3c.
- 7 Kminek-Szedlo, 1895, n. 1820; Pernigotti, 1980, n. 28; Picchi, 2012, in particular 98–100.

- 8 BCVe, Stampe D 40, c. 55, *Monumenti del Museo Grimani pubblicati nell'anno 1831*; Kminek-Szedlo 1895, n. 1824; Picchi 2009, in particular 40, plate XXI, figs 5–6.
- 9 BCVe, Stampe D 40, c. 55, *Monumenti del Museo Grimani pubblicati nell'anno 1831*; Kminek-Szedlo, 1895, n. 347; Picchi, 2009, in particular 40, plate XXI, figs 5 and 7.
- 10 Daris 2005.
- 11 La Guardia, 1985, nn. 1009, 1013, 1020, 1023, 1027.
- 12 La Guardia, 1985, n. 1028. In a letter addressed to Gaetano Ferlini in 1838 (*Ibid.* 1175), Cattaneo states that the Austrian government denied him permission also to buy the first Nizzoli collection of Egyptian antiquities, which was then sold to Ernst August Burghart in 1821 and now forms the core of the Egyptian Section of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna; cf. Satzinger 1994.
- 13 BCABo, Mss. Palagi, Cart. 31, f. 1. Most of Palagi's manuscripts are now preserved at the Manuscripts and Rare Books Department of the Archiginnasio Library in Bologna (BCABo).
- 14 Del Francia, 1994.
- 15 BCABo, Mss. Palagi, Cart. 31, f. 2a-b.
- 16 BCABo, Mss. Palagi, Cart. 31, f. 2, lett. c5, 6–7; lett. d3, 12–13; lett. e3; lett. f5–7.
- 17 BCABo, Mss Palagi, Cart. 31, f. 2, lett. c5, *Catalogo di una raccolta di Antichità Egiziane, s.l., s.d.*, published in Pernigotti 1991b, 80–84.
- 18 BNCfi, CV, 294.171, Letter from Giuseppe Nizzoli to Simone Luigi Peruzzi, Cairo, 19 June 1826.
- 19 Balboni, 1906, 278; Gabrielli, 1990; Pernigotti, 1991a; Popoff, 2009, Picchi, 2011b; Bierbrier, 2012; Einaudi, 2013. With regard to Amalia as a traveller cf. Parati, 1994; Scriboni, 1996; Vanzan, 1996 and 2010; Spackman, 2005.
- 20 The diary was republished by Pernigotti in 1996, who seems intent on reissuing it (Pernigotti, 2013) and Arriaga, 2002.
- 21 Nizzoli joined her only at weekends.
- 22 Pernigotti, 1991b republished the catalogue in *Appendice II*, 46–79.
- 23 Nizzoli, 1827, 22, n. 4; Kminek-Szedlo, 1895, nn. 1869 and 1887; Martin, 1989, 78–84, [69].
- 24 Martin, 1989, 87–92, [72]. These wall fragments are now preserved at the National Museum of Antiquities of Leiden. Another one (Florence inv. n. 2566), which joins to Leiden H.III.0000, was purchased by J. F. Champollion and I. Rossellini in 1828–29.
- 25 Nizzoli, 1827, 24–25, n. 1; Kminek-Szedlo, 1895, n. 1906.
- 26 Nizzoli, 1827, 23, n. 6; Kminek-Szedlo, 1895, n. 1891.
- 27 Nizzoli, 1827, 23–24, n. 9; Kminek-Szedlo, 1895, n. 1944.
- 28 Nizzoli, 1827, 21–22, n. 2; Kminek-Szedlo, 1895, n. 1912.
- 29 Nizzoli, 1827, 22–23, n. 5; Kminek-Szedlo, 1895, n. 1890.
- 30 Both these copies, whose handwritten notes do not match perfectly, are preserved at the Archiginnasio Library of Bologna, one in the 'Frati-Sorbelli' historical catalogue and the other in Mss Palagi, Cart. 31, f. 2, lett. c2.
- 31 BCABo, Mss Palagi, Cart. 31, f. 2, lett. c4.
- 32 Donatelli, 1983.
- 33 Picchi, 2013–14.
- 34 Raven, Aston, Horácková, Picchi, 2012–13, 14–16.

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Artists and Painters in the ‘German House’ at Thebes, 1905–15

Daniel Polz

On 24 December 1904, a small group of men and women of different nationalities gathered in a newly built house in Egypt for a very special occasion.

The party had been organised by the founder and builder of the ‘German House’ in Thebes, namely the German archaeologist and architect Ludwig Borchardt, and his wife Mimi. Among the participants of this illustrious event were the British archaeologist and Egyptologist Edward Russell Ayrton, the British Chief-Inspector of the Egyptian Antiquities Service, James Edward Quibell, and his wife Annie, the German Egyptologist Kurt Sethe, the Egyptian agent of the German Consulate General in Luxor, Mohareb Todrous, Ludwig Borchardt’s assistant, Georg Möller, and the German representative of (Thomas) Cook’s Nile Service, Leo Pfahl.

The meeting took place on Christmas Eve to celebrate the inauguration of a rather unique building, which had been constructed, so it seemed, in the middle of nowhere on the edge of the desert in a remote area of southern Upper Egypt and opposite the modern city of Luxor. At the same occasion, a guestbook specifically designed and handmade for the purpose was also presented (Fig. 11.1). Naturally, this building has proven to have an extremely interesting background and prehistory.¹

At the end of the 19th century, Egyptological circles in Germany suggested a permanent presence for German Egyptology in Egypt that did not exist at the time. Of course, there had been the famous expedition to Egypt and Nubia headed by Richard Carl Lepsius in 1842–44, whose publications are still an invaluable source of information and inspiration. But unlike the French Egyptologists who had created and directed the Egyptian Antiquities Organisation since

1859, and unlike the British archaeologists and Egyptologists who conducted vast operations throughout the country, a German presence was almost non-existent at the end of the 19th century.

After a year-long debate within the field of German Egyptology – especially within the so-called Berlin School – the imperial government of Germany was finally convinced that a German Egyptological presence in Egypt was necessary. Needless to say, many institutions, authorities and individuals became involved in the process.

On a political level, the two main protagonists were the German Emperor, Wilhelm II, and the Egyptian viceroy, Abbas Helmi II. Besides his undeniable wish to make Germany a colonial power, Wilhelm II also had a keen interest in supporting archaeological investigations, especially in the Near East, where he financially supported several expeditions from his own purse. Abbas Helmi II, on the other hand, seems to have been a great admirer of Wilhelm II, and was strongly supportive of German archaeological interests in Egypt.

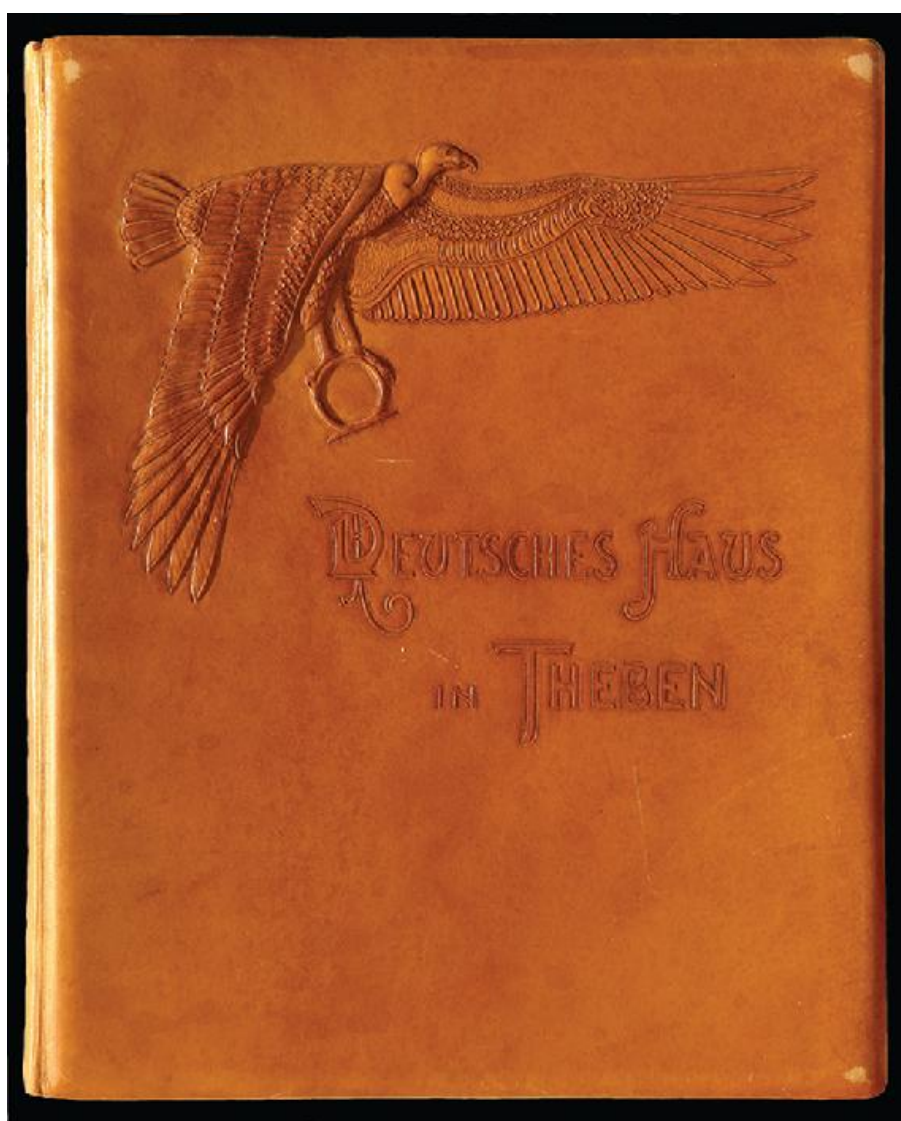


Figure 11.1: The Guestbook of the 'German House' 1904. © German Archaeological Institute, Cairo.

On an Egyptological level, the protagonists were Adolf Erman, the most important German Egyptologist at that time, along with Heinrich Schäfer, the Assistant Director of the Egyptian Museum in Berlin. Ludwig Borchardt, a former student of Erman, was the person who worked on the Egyptian side, having been appointed as a scientific counsellor to the Imperial German Consulate General in Cairo in 1899.

The site for the first permanent presence of German Egyptology was chosen wisely. In the middle of the vast ancient cemeteries of Western Thebes, Borchardt found the ideal spot to build on: an enormous mound of old debris at the very edge of the desert, right in the middle

of the Theban Necropolis, just a few paces away from the so-called ‘Tombs of the Nobles’ and the huge temples of the Pharaohs, and within walking distance of the Valley of the Kings and the Valley of the Queens.

Borchardt asked the French-governed Antiquities Organisation for support, but eventually he negotiated the case directly with the Egyptian Government, particularly with the Egyptian Ministry of Finance. In 1904, a contract was signed between the Ministry and the German Government, according to which the building ground in Western Thebes was sold to the German Government for the ‘nominal price’ of one Egyptian pound. Being educated as architects, Borchardt and his brother drew up the plans for the building, and in the middle of 1904 construction work was started. By the end of December, the ‘German House’ was completed, and the inauguration festivities could take place.

Considering the period at the beginning of the 20th century, Borchardt’s introduction and therefore the first entry in the German House guestbook reads as surprisingly modern. His introduction includes the philosophy of the building, its proposed use as well as ideas about its future inhabitants. The house was not solely conceived as a mere ‘excavation house’. Borchardt wanted the house to be a place for scholars with all kinds of interests who needed a comfortable resting place (including a library and facilities for developing photographs) during whatever project the scholars were in Egypt for. Moreover, he extended his hospitality to ‘all similarly minded men of other nations’.² And, indeed, the names and dates of those who lived and worked in the house during the first decade after its inauguration demonstrate Borchardt’s attitude. The main sources for this early history of the German House and, more specifically, its inhabitants, is the house guestbook, as well as the extensive correspondence of Borchardt kept today in the archives of the German Archaeological Institute Cairo and at the Swiss Institute for Egyptian Building History in Cairo.³

The following list of selected individuals who stayed in the House during the period from 1905 until 1914 illustrates Borchardt’s philosophy:

- Édouard Naville and his wife Marguerite stayed in the house several times for a total period of over five months conducting the Egypt Exploration Fund excavations at the Temple of Mentuhotep at Deir el-Bahari, as did Somers Clarke during the last season of the project there.
- Georg Schweinfurth, Uvo Hölscher, and Walter Wreszinski lived in the house for their respective projects in the Theban

mountains, in the Temple of Rameses III at Medinet Habu, and in the 'Tombs of the Nobles'.

- Georg Möller conducted the first systematic German excavations in Western Thebes, that is, in an area immediately to the north of the house and in Deir el-Medineh. According to an entry in the guestbook, Möller particularly enjoyed the house's position, working as an archaeologist on the west bank of Thebes.
- Sir Alan Gardiner lived in the house for a month, collating texts for the Berlin Wörterbuch-Projekt, and
- the British ethnologist C. G. Seligmann stayed in the house for two weeks.

In addition, and most interestingly, Borchardt explicitly included in his introduction artists – 'Künstler' – as future guests. And indeed, until 1914, almost a dozen artists and painters used the house for their work in Luxor and on the West Bank. While most of these had a German background, one interesting guest was a British citizen, Lancelot Crane. He lived in the house for more than two months, working as an artist for Norman de Garis Davies and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, especially in the fabulous tomb of Menena in Sheikh Abd el-Qurna. Obviously, Lancelot inherited his skills from his father, the famous British artist, illustrator and creator of children's books, Walter Crane.

Among the first artists who stayed at the German House for an extended period of time were the two ladies, Elise Mahler and Maria Ressel.⁴ Elise Mahler was born in what is now the northernmost city of Germany, Flensburg, in 1856; Maria Ressel was born more than 20 years later in Vienna. Mahler was from a well-to-do family and became interested in painting as a teenager. In 1896, she moved to Rothenburg ob der Tauber, a picturesque medieval city in southern Germany, where she gave courses in oil painting and watercolours. It seems that Ressel and Mahler first met in one of Mahler's classes when Ressel was a student. During the next few years, Mahler became Ressel's personal tutor. Over time, the two ladies seem to have developed a very close relationship that lasted until the death of Mahler in 1924. Both of them suffered from bad health for most of their lives, and time and again, one had to take care of the other. Knowing this, it is even more amazing that they decided to endure the stresses and strains of an extended trip to Egypt in 1908. At that time, this endeavour was certainly very ambitious for two European ladies, even though they had booked a complete package with Thomas Cook Travels. The main reason behind the journey, however, was of a more financial nature: both were constantly living above their means and

they hoped to produce paintings and watercolours in Egypt that they could sell to wealthy European tourists on site.

For various reasons, this scheme did not work out as the two ladies had hoped. In the early weeks of 1909, they stayed at a boarding house in Egypt's southern border town of Assuan, suffering from various illnesses. At that point, they decided to make contact with the director of the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo, Ludwig Borchardt, asking him for permission to stay for several months at the German House in Luxor.

Borchardt's first reaction was a clear 'No'. He politely, but directly made it clear to the two ladies that the living and working conditions in the German House were not exactly ideal for people with health problems and who were entirely on their own. However, Mahler and Ressel did not give in, and continued trying to convince Borchardt that they were perfectly capable of taking care of themselves. Eventually, Borchardt could not resist any longer and gave his permission. Mahler and Ressel moved in to the house on 1 February 1909 and lived and worked there for almost two months.

Surprisingly little is known of the results of the work completed during their stay at the house. However, some of Mahler's paintings and a number of Ressel's etchings have recently come to light. Two oil paintings made by Elise Mahler,⁵ for example, are quite impressive for two reasons: first, the format of both paintings is a wide-angle panoramic view of areas on the Luxor West Bank, in the midst of the vast cemeteries of Pharaonic times. The still unexcavated Temple of Rameses III at Medinet Habu is shown in one painting (Fig. 11.2) (the white house situated a little lower and to the left of the temple seems to be Howard Carter's first house on the West Bank). The other offers a most spectacular view of the Theban mountains with their peak in the middle (known in Arabic as 'El-Qurn'), and – on the left and barely visible – the silhouette of the Ptolemaic temple of Deir el-Medineh, also unexcavated (Fig. 11.3). What is noteworthy is the small detail of a caravan of camels a little further down, which certainly depicts a group of tourists, as no local villager would go to the site via this path.





Figure 11.3: 'Tal de Könige' by Elise Mahler. © Museumberg Flensburg.

The second point, which makes the two paintings almost unique, is their perspective, or more precisely, the place where Mahler positioned her easel and canvas to create the paintings. In both cases, it is obvious that the easel was not placed at ground level but on a somewhat elevated surface. If the viewing angle of both paintings is considered, there is only one spot in the whole area where Mahler could have put up her easel, namely on the roof of the German House. The roof provided an ideal view, and not just for artists.

Although a contemporary of Elise Mahler, one artist shows a strikingly different attitude, character and style: Carl Wuttke was born seven years before Elise Mahler, in 1849, and seems to have been quite an extraordinary person. At the age of 25, he travelled on foot from Munich to Rome via the Alps, and spent several years on a trip around the world, including extended visits to Hawaii and Japan as well as India and China. During these travels, Wuttke created a vast number of oil paintings, some of monumental scale, which were later bought by Wilhelm II and put on display in the Emperor's castle in Berlin.⁶ He travelled to Egypt a total of eight times, where he also produced an enormous amount of high quality paintings. Many of his rather mainstream paintings at that time were successfully reproduced as postcards and had an almost worldwide circulation. His work is best illustrated by some of these oil-paintings-turned-postcards, which also mirror an interesting attitude of the artist. One of Wuttke's paintings of the Temple of Luxor is shown in Figure 11.4; and in the background of a portrait of Wuttke by another painter (Fig. 11.5) there is a rendition of Wuttke's own painting of the temple.

Although Wuttke became famous during his lifetime and displayed his paintings at almost every art exhibition in Germany, there is still

no *catalogue raisonné* of his work. Quite recently, a number of hitherto unknown Wuttke oil paintings have come to light. Of these, a small pocket-sized painting (Fig. 11.6) is a beautiful view of the river Nile somewhere in Middle or Upper Egypt with the title *On the Nile*.

As far as it is known, Wuttke stayed in the house only once, and for just one week, in February 1909. Among the paintings he created during this time, were two views of the German House and its vicinity. One of these was also reproduced as a postcard and vividly illustrates the impression that the house left on its visitors at that time (Fig. 11.7).

Much less is known about the life and *oeuvre* of another painter who is worth mentioning. Arthur Schlubeck was born in Stettin in 1878 and died in Berlin in 1945. He travelled to Egypt several times, and stayed in the German House twice, in 1913 and 1914. Although Schlubeck must have produced a considerable amount, little is known of the whereabouts of his paintings and watercolours. In 1906, a gallery in Munich organised an exhibition of Schlubeck's works, which also included drawings and paintings of the aforementioned painters Walter Crane and Carl Wuttke.⁷ One of Schlubeck's favourite subjects seems to have been portraits of quite a broad spectrum, as illustrated by two examples. The first, which Schlubeck exhibited at one of the Great Berlin Exhibitions of Art, is undated but was certainly created before the First World War because it shows a portrait of the oldest son of the German Emperor Wilhelm II, Crown Prince Wilhelm (Fig. 11.8). The other is the *Picture of an Unknown Lady*, dated to 1919 and published in the Munich-based journal of art and literature *Jugend* that became eponymous of the Art-Nouveau *Jugendstil*) era (Fig. 11.9).

Another of Schlubeck's favourite subjects, namely figure studies of nude models, seems to have caused considerable irritation – at least in Egypt. Schlubeck wanted to paint nude models on the roof of the German House and requested Borchardt's permission to have female local models working with him in the house. Borchardt vehemently refused, even after an elongated exchange of telegrams and letters in which Schlubeck eloquently described the necessity of his endeavour for the sake of modern art. According to Schlubeck, he even requested and received the support of several European citizens living in the vicinity of the house, among whom were Mr and Mrs Mackays and an American couple. Borchardt recommended that Schlubeck should make his studies – *Studien* – in the seclusion of the nearby Valley of the Queens.

At the end of his first stay in the house, Schlubeck left an entry in the guestbook in which he thanked Borchardt for his permission to stay there and stated: 'I painted landscape-studies in the mountains and nude-studies of coloured and European models' (entry for 12 May

1913). I do not know of any originals of Schlubeck's nude studies made during his stay at the German House, but he may have used some of them as a basis for later works, for example, for an oil painting made in 1924 which has the title *Sonnenanbeter* (*Sun Worshipers*) and which was recently sold at an auction in Denmark.

There may be another, more political, aspect of Schlubeck's nude studies. During the First World War, in 1915, the German House was destroyed. More than ten years later, Borchardt wrote in an entry of the guestbook that 'the German House was destroyed by the British military authorities' and he continues with a quote from a long-unknown source in English, 'because it was found to be the centre of illicit antiquities trade and otherwise undesirable'.⁹

In Egyptological circles, it was rumoured that Howard Carter was the driving force behind the demolition of the house. Although this rumour was refuted by T. G. H. James (James 1992, 177), the story has made it into modern literature: in her 2001 archaeological novel *Lord of the Silent*, the American novelist Elisabeth Peters quotes Borchardt's entry, more or less accurately, and leaves it to the reader to judge whether or not Carter was involved.¹⁰

Certainly, Howard Carter had nothing personally to do with the destruction of the house. In fact, the demolition was ordered in November 1915 by the British High Commissioner in Egypt, Sir Arthur Henry McMahon, and Borchardt's enigmatic entry in the guestbook of the German House is, in fact, a quote from an official message sent by the American diplomatic agency in Cairo to the American Ambassador in Berlin in August 1916:¹¹ 'I have been informed by the Authorities that the house in question was found by them to be the centre of illicit antiquity trade, as well as otherwise undesirable from the point of view of the British Military Authorities who, therefore, ordered that it should be pulled down in November of last year'

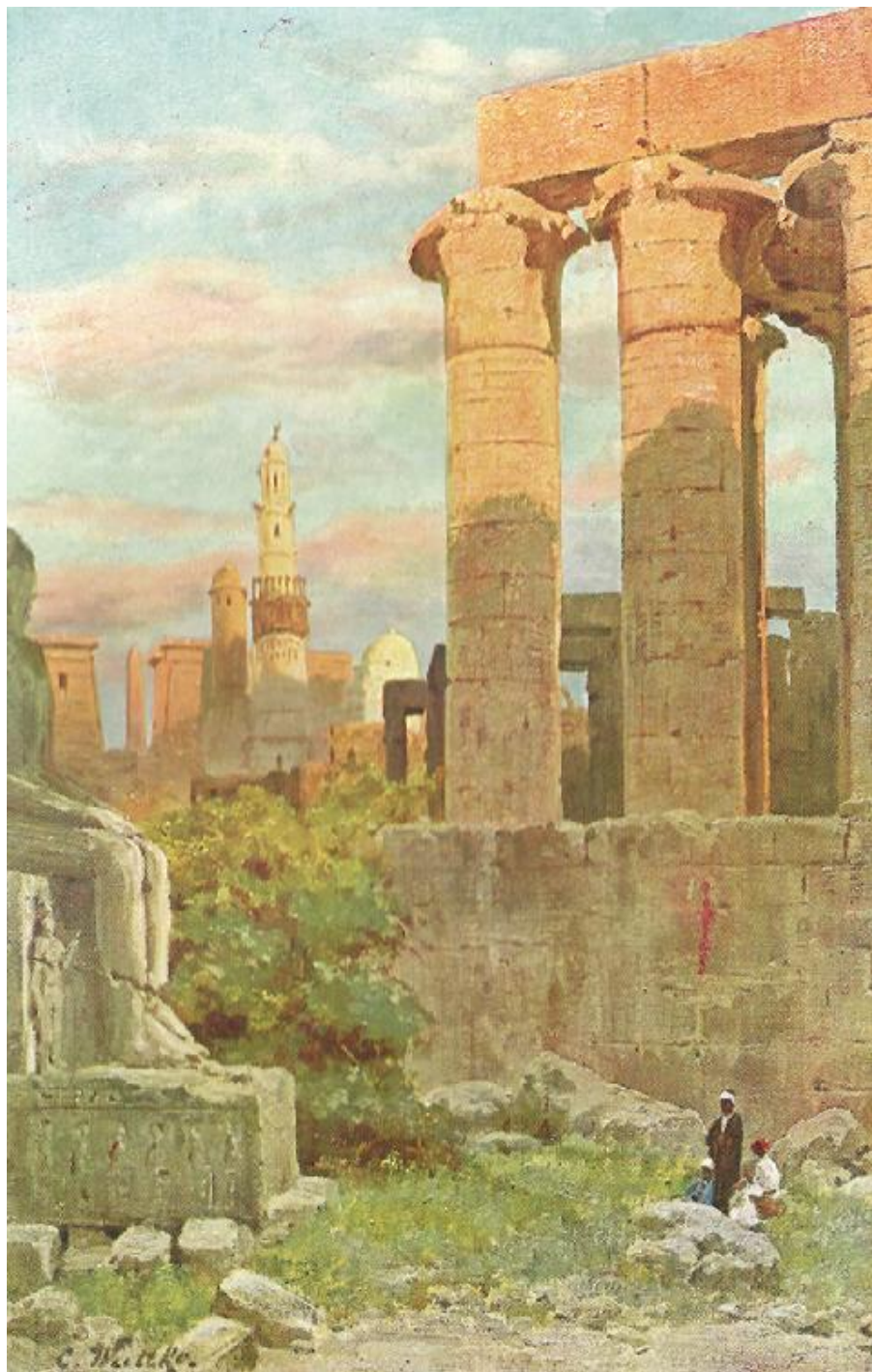


Figure 11.4: 'Luxor, Temple des Amenophis III' by Carl Wuttke. From a postcard in the author's collection.

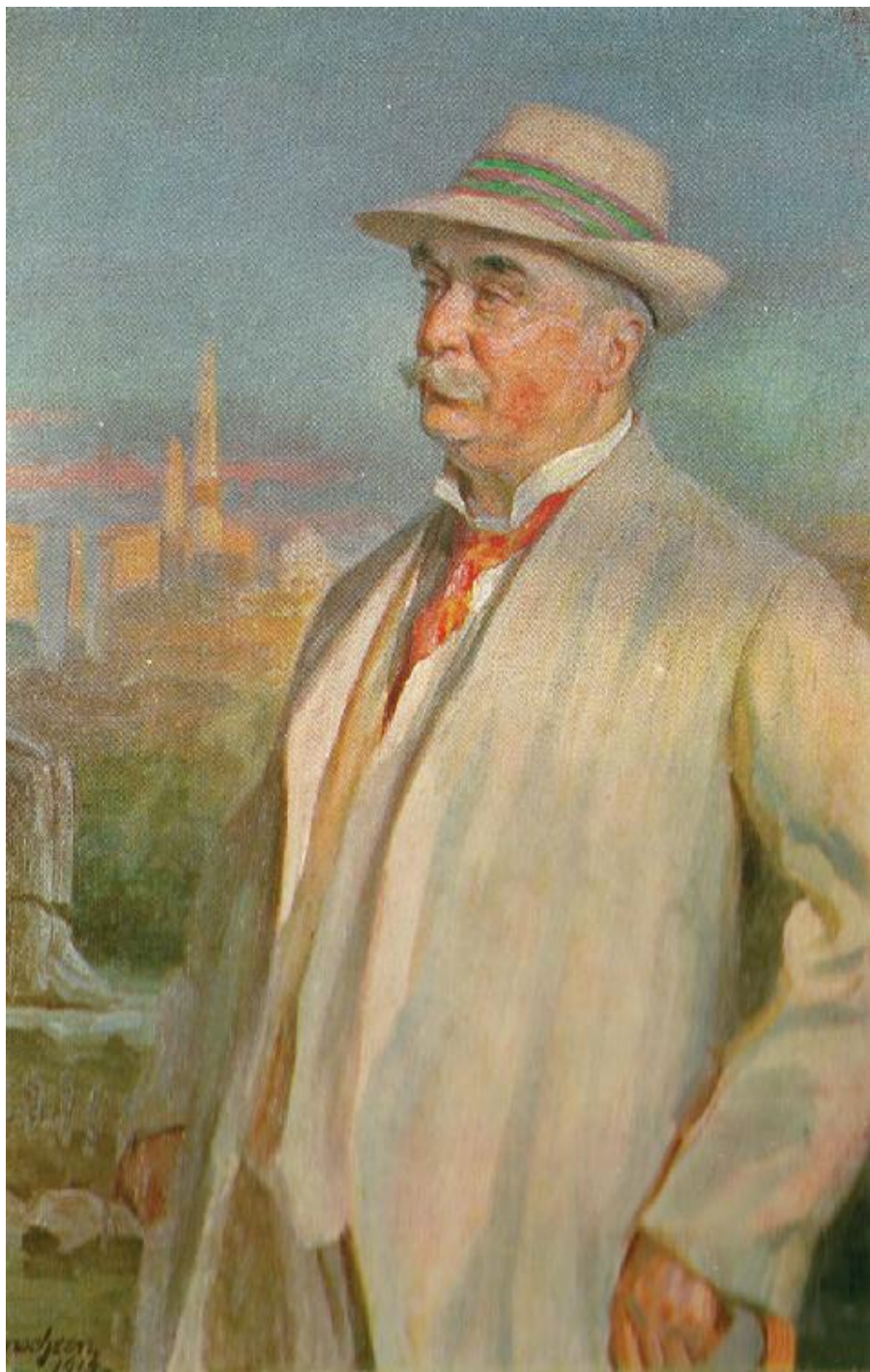


Figure 11.5: 'Bildnis des Kunstmalers C. Wuttke' by Hermann Barrenscheen. From a postcard in the author's collection.



Figure 11.6: 'Am Nile' by Carl Wuttke. From a private collection.

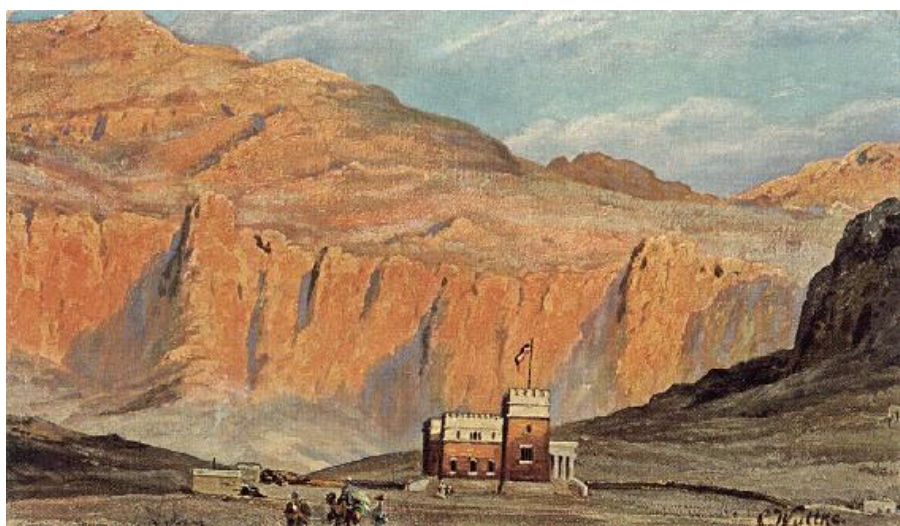


Figure 11.7: 'The German House' in the Desert of Thebes' by Carl Wuttke. From a postcard in the author's collection.



Figure 11.8: Portrait of Crown Prince Willhelm. From a postcard in the author's collection.

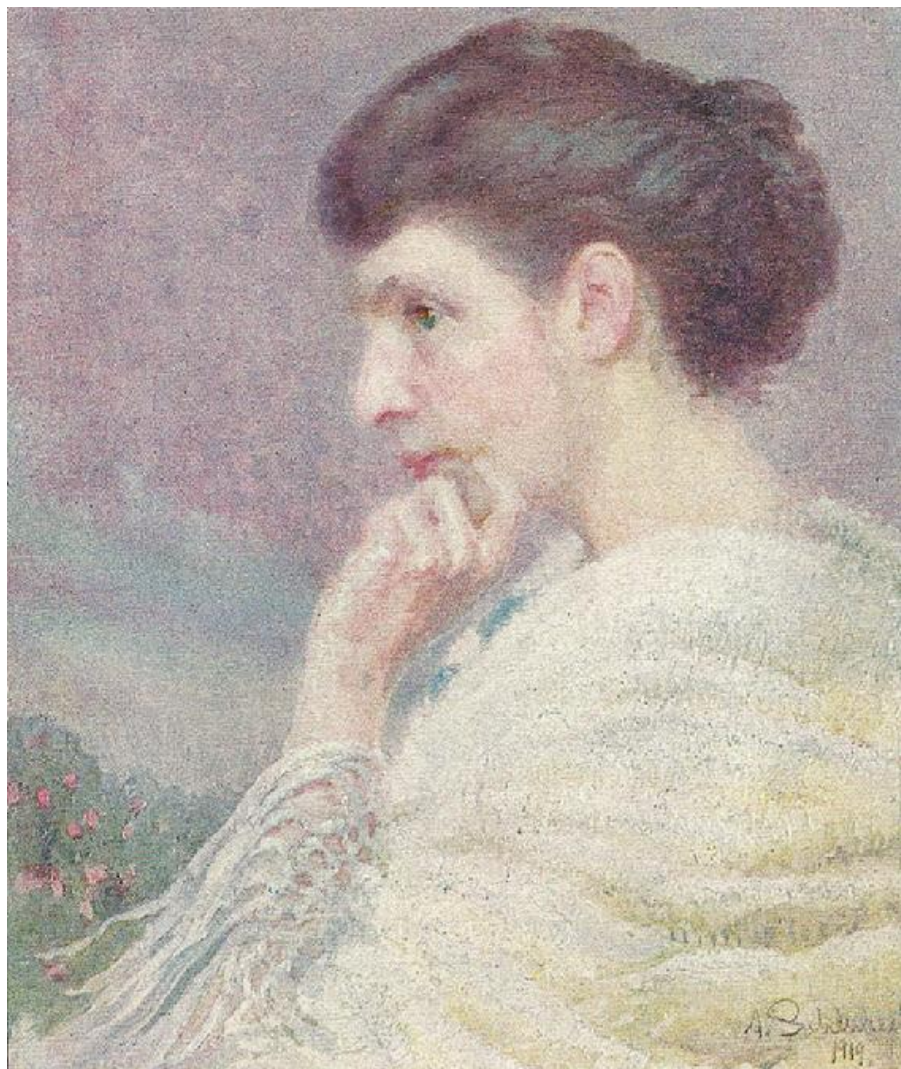


Figure 11.9: 'Damenbildnis' by Arthur Schlubeck. © Daniel Polz, Cairo.

It has long been a question of some interest what the expression 'otherwise undesirable' might refer to in this context. Perhaps, one hundred years ago and in a remote area of southern Upper Egypt, artistic endeavours such as nude studies were not as acceptable as the Berlin-based inhabitant of the house, Schlubeck, had believed. And, perhaps, this kind of 'activity' was justly deemed 'undesirable' by both the authorities and the local inhabitants of the villages around the house – activities like this would not have gone unnoticed in those days.

Be that as it may, shortly after Schlubeck had left Egypt, Borchardt rewrote the usage regulations of the German House, stressing its use for scientific work as being its main purpose. After the war, Borchardt

re-built the house, and in his guestbook entry on the occasion of its re-inauguration (1 April 1927), artists and painters are no longer mentioned as possible inhabitants. Indeed, during the following decade, only one artist is recorded as having stayed in the house for a period of less than two weeks.

Notes

- 1 Voss, S. (2013) *Die Geschichte der Abteilung Kairo des DAI im Spannungsfeld deutscher politischer Interessen 1881–1929*. Menschen-Kulturen-Traditionen 8,1. Rahden/Westf., Marie Leidorf, pp. 99–108.
- 2 Polz, D. (2007) *Das Deutsche Haus in Theben: 'die Möglichkeit gründlicher Arbeit und frischen Schaffens'*. In G. Dreyer/D. Polz (eds), *Begegnung mit der Vergangenheit. 100 Jahre in Ägypten – Deutsches Archäologisches Institut Kairo 1907–2007*, pp. 25–31. Mainz, Philipp von Zabern, p. 25.
- 3 I owe much of the information provided here to the courtesy of Beatrice and Cornelius von Pilgrim.
- 4 See the biographies of both in: Hümme, J. (2007) *Elise Mahler (1856–1924): Ein Künstlerleben zwischen Flensburg und Rothenburg o. d. Tauber*. Heide, Boyens.
- 5 *Ibid.*, pp. 52–53.
- 6 See Wuttke's autobiography, Wuttke, C. (1925) *Reise-Erinnerungen von Studienfahrten rings um die Erde*. München.
- 7 Heinemann, Galerie (1906) *Kollektivausstellungen: Professor Otto Hierl-Deronco, München. Walter Crane, London. Arthur Schlubeck, Berlin*. München, Heinemann, p. 3.
- 8 This would be Ernest J. H. Mackay, at that time working in several of the Theban Tombs, see Bierbrier M. L. (2012) *Who was Who in Egyptology. 4th revised edition*. London, Egypt Exploration Society, p. 348.
- 9 Polz 2007, p. 27.
- 10 Peters, E. (2001) *Lord of the Silent*. New York, Harper Collins, pp. 227–28.
- 11 Voss (2013), p. 176.

Acknowledgement

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Raymond O'Shea and *The Sand Kings of Oman* as a Source for Trucial Coast History

Nicholas Stanley-Price

Of the Britons who served in the Trucial States (now the United Arab Emirates) in the first half of the 20th century, few have left written accounts of their experiences there. One of the few who did was Raymond O'Shea (Fig. 12.1), who spent eight months in 1944–45 as Station Manager of the British airfield at Sharjah, located some 20 km up the coast from Dubai. Two years later, Methuen published a memoir written by him, under the title *The Sand Kings of Oman: The experiences of an R.A.F. officer in the little-known regions of Trucial Oman Arabia*. Although reviewed favourably in many quarters, it was criticised by the explorer Wilfrid Thesiger, whose recent crossings of 'the Empty Quarter' lent prestige to his authority on the region. The credibility of O'Shea's memoir declined over the following decades to the extent that, by the 1980s, some actually doubted the authenticity of the book and the reality of its author.

The book, if used critically, is in fact a valuable memoir of an expatriate's life in the Trucial States during the Second World War. Its authenticity as an autobiographical memoir can be confirmed by reference to the official British records of the time, to other contemporary accounts and to recollections of the author's family. Moreover, responsibility for some of its deficiencies can be assigned to the publishers of the book rather than to its author alone.

RAYMOND O'SHEA AND THE BRITISH AIRFIELD AT SHARJAH

The history of the Trucial States in the first half of the 20th century has been written about mainly in terms of the history of oil

exploration. But the first discoveries of oil in the Gulf coincided with important developments in aviation. In the same year (1932) that oil was discovered in Bahrain, Imperial Airways switched the route of its regular flights between London and Karachi from following the eastern, Persian coast of the Gulf to the western coast via Bahrain. To make the western coast route a feasible one, they came to an agreement with the Ruler of Sharjah, one of the Trucial States, Shaikh Sultan bin Saqr al-Qasimi. Under this agreement, Imperial Airways built an airfield on his territory for its aircraft to stop over and refuel. Since the airline's schedules required that the stopover be overnight, it built a fortified rest house adjacent to the landing strip where its passengers could safely spend the night. As a result, Sharjah suddenly became a name known to British travellers heading towards India and Australia.¹



Figure 12.1: Raymond O'Shea. Courtesy of Chris Bird.

The installation built by Imperial Airways in 1931–32 served as an international airfield for civil aviation for some 45 years. Following the demise of Imperial Airways in 1939, the new state airline the British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) continued to make use of the Sharjah airfield for its own flights to India and Australia (Fig. 12.2). But it withdrew shortly after the war when developments in aviation rendered a stopover in the Trucial States no longer necessary. By the late 1970s, when the regional airline Gulf Air was the principal user of the airfield, it had been enveloped by the modern city of

Sharjah and a new international airport was built outside the city limits.

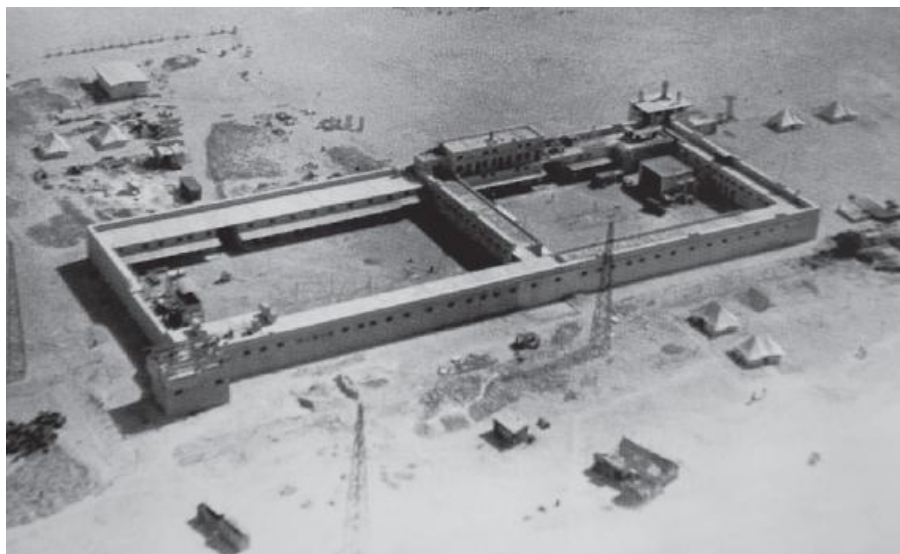


Figure 12.2: Sharjah Airfield from the air (c. 1940). The Station Manager's quarters were in the courtyard on the right (and the former overnight Rest House of Imperial Airways).

In addition to its role in civil aviation, the airfield proved extremely useful to the Allies during the Second World War as a transit point for troops and war materiel being shipped to India and the Far East. From its bases in Iraq, the British Royal Air Force (RAF) had been using the Sharjah airfield regularly as part of its regional operations around the Arabian Peninsula. But, from June 1940, it started to base aircraft permanently at Sharjah and continued to do so for the duration of the war. For most of 1944, there was also a substantial American presence. An Air Transport Command unit of the United States Army Air Force (USAAF) was stationed there in order to service numerous flights carrying troops and materiel to theatres further east.

During the war years, the Station Manager at Sharjah was a serving RAF officer who was seconded to BOAC. One of the series of officers who filled this post was Raymond O'Shea. He served as Station Manager for eight months in 1944–45 before being invalided home. Immediately on returning to England, he wrote up his experiences there in the memoir that was published by Methuen in 1947.

O'Shea had left Sharjah in June 1945 and the preface of his book is dated November 1945. In producing his manuscript so quickly, he seems to have drawn extensively either on a diary that he had kept or on copies of letters that he had regularly sent to his family.

His preface opens as follows: 'This book, a factual account of my experiences whilst serving on the Trucial Oman Coast of Arabia in

1944 and 1945, is not intended to be a geographical, historical or ethnological treatise. It is simply a travel book, or, perhaps more accurately, a diary of my day-to-day life written in narrative form. I do not claim that it contains anything new or unfamiliar to the reader of Arabian travel lore...'. After carefully revising the manuscript several times, he wrote, 'I believe it to be reasonably accurate and to reflect exact conditions as they existed in 1945. If some of the experts are unable to agree with my conclusions and inferences, particularly as regards the origin of the Arab race, I would reply that this is a point still open to speculation and theory, and that my guess is as good as theirs'.²

His memoir describes in detail his experience of managing the airfield during the Second World War. For the historian of aviation in this part of the world, it is therefore invaluable. It is also a very rare account of the day-to-day life of an expatriate in the Trucial States at that period. As such memoirs tend to do, it contains much incidental comment, not always flattering, on local society and customs as the author attempted to understand them and to elaborate his own theories about the Arabs.

RECEPTION OF O'SHEA'S MEMOIR

On its publication in 1947, O'Shea's book received reviews in weeklies, such as the *New Statesman* and *Spectator*, and brief notices in specialist journals, such as the *Geographical Review* and *Foreign Affairs*. Although the author had modestly denied that 'it contains anything new or unfamiliar to the reader of Arabian travel lore', it was the subject of longer reviews in the *Middle East Journal* and the *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, both of them written by the same scholar, Eric Macro.

In the *Middle East Journal*, Macro wrote: 'To authorities on Arabia, *The Sand Kings of Oman* will not be a valuable book since it is neither the product of prodigious research nor the record of a great journey; it does not give any hitherto unknown information, and a great deal of the material it contains is inaccurate. It is however a revealing word-picture for those not conversant with the country.'³ He applauds the chapters devoted to oil, pearls, slavery and piracy while commenting that the statistics for oil production are already out of date. Summing up, Macro welcomed it for what it was, 'a diary of the details and impressions of life in a desert outpost'.

In his other review,⁴ written for the *JRCAS*, he was more critical. Macro noted that the appearance of *Sand Kings of Oman* had been overshadowed by the long-awaited publication of Van der Meulen's

Aden to the Hadhramaut [published by John Murray in 1947]. The latter book exhibited a long-standing authority on Arabia and excellent writing, neither of which O'Shea could claim. While it was clear that the author had taken great pains to enlighten himself about Trucial Oman, he had revealed nothing new. O'Shea's 'impertinent references to recognized authorities, his useless bibliographic appendix, his very inaccurate statistics on Arabian oil and the gross inaccuracies both in his maps and in his reference to Philby's crossing of al-Rimal, are amongst many factors which convey an unfavourable impression to the reader'.

In this second review, Macro mentioned the chapter in O'Shea's book that has proved to be the most vulnerable to criticism. This was an account of an expedition that O'Shea writes that he made from Sharjah to the area of the Liwa oasis (in what today is southern Abu Dhabi) in search of a 'lost city' that had been reported to him. O'Shea's description of the ruins he found on this expedition is very brief. The site of the discovery is described in a mere 12 lines. The author makes no great claim for its significance and hopes that an archaeologist in the future might retrace his steps and determine what the site was.

Despite the modesty of O'Shea's claims, Wilfred Thesiger subjected them to scathing criticism in an extended footnote to his account of his second crossing of 'the Empty Quarter'.⁵ He had long planned to be the first European to visit the Liwa oasis. Reading that the unknown O'Shea had himself claimed to have been in Liwa a couple of years previously must have come as quite a shock. Thesiger was especially sceptical about what he said were O'Shea's claims to have discovered the 'lost city' of 'Ad and made some telling points against O'Shea's credibility. He came close to questioning whether the expedition had ever gone to the Liwa oasis, and concluded, sternly, that 'he must produce more facts to substantiate the account of his journey before it is accepted'.⁶

O'Shea's innocent adventure had stirred up a hornet's nest in the competitive field of Arabian exploration. But Arabian explorers were not the only offended party. The Ruler of Sharjah was not amused by some of the references in O'Shea's book to himself and his society. In December 1947, Sir Rupert Hay, the Political Resident in the Gulf, submitted a report to the Foreign Office in London to the effect that the Ruler of Sharjah had made a strong protest to the Political Agent in Bahrain regarding remarks made in the book about him and his brother Sheikhs. But Hay, who knew the region intimately, added his own gloss when he wrote, 'The description in the book of the manners and customs of the Trucial Coast Shaikhs and their subjects are conspicuous amongst an amazing farrago of inaccuracies as containing

an element of reason and truth'.⁷ And the Bahrain Political Agent himself, C. J. Pelly, wrote rather mischievously, 'His book is full of inaccuracies. In fact, the truth about the Trucial Shaikhs, if published, could not fail to constitute a libel, in view of the legal maxim that "the greater the truth the greater the libel". But Mr O'Shea was not to know that'.⁸

Despite O'Shea's own claim not to have published anything new, his book was cited positively by other scholars in the 1950s. For instance, Bowen (1951) drew extensively on O'Shea's account for his own review of the pearl fisheries in the Gulf. But the 'lost city' incident proved to be the factor that undermined the credibility of the book. The criticism reached a wider audience after James (Jan) Morris published his *Sultan in Oman* in 1957. He pointed out⁹ that two photographs included in O'Shea's memoir as supposedly illustrating a 'lost city' and a fortress in the mountains were, in fact, views of the harbour town of Muscat (Thesiger had also questioned the photograph purporting to be the 'lost city' but did not recognise it as a view of Muscat). Morris's book has been reprinted several times and is still in print, so criticisms of O'Shea's desert exploration have remained current.

The credibility of *The Sand Kings of Oman* reached its nadir in the 1970s: expatriate circles in the Emirates spread the rumour that it was not a genuine autobiographical account and even that its supposed author had never existed. The rumour was given printed authority in 1980 when O'Shea's account of his desert exploration was again subjected to critical assessment: '...what I thought was a little known book [*The Sand Kings of Oman*] had been read by certain knowledgeable people who claimed it to be fictitious. One person considering that all O'Shea had done was to have talked to local people, read appropriate publications and concocted the expedition'.¹⁰

One of the leading scholars of the Arabian Peninsula picked up the same gossip: 'I had been told by several people in the past that two TOS [Trucial Oman Scouts] officers dreamed up the book in their spare time, and without visiting Oman'.¹¹

With his book long ago reduced by common gossip to possibly being a fictitious concoction by army officers who had never been to Sharjah, it is time to ask who was Raymond O'Shea and whether his memoir is a genuine one.

THE QUEST FOR O'SHEA

In his memoir, O'Shea writes almost nothing about his life before the war, other than claiming to have had several meetings with T. E.

Lawrence. He had evidently been influenced by Lawrence (unduly so, commented Macro acidly in one of his reviews) and mentions him a number of times in his memoir. He also names a cousin, General Sir John Shea, as having been with Allenby in Palestine – the cousin can be identified as Sir John Stuart Mackenzie Shea GCB, KCMG, DSO (1869–1966) who was indeed in Palestine in 1917–18. But the scattered references to his own previous career are few: in different passages, he mentions that he had travelled in China and India; had served at G.H.Q. in France in 1939–40; and in 1942 had been Administrative Officer of the British Flying Training School at Ponca, Oklahoma (USA). One of several flying schools in the USA where British RAF pilots trained during the war under the US Army Air Force, the one at Ponca operated only between August 1941 and April 1944.¹² O'Shea's statement is therefore entirely credible.

The author was born George Raymond Shea on 21 June 1905 in Margate, UK and died of cancer in Durban, South Africa in 1952 at the age of 47 (information kindly provided by his son, Chris Bird). Details of his career in the RAF can be found in the *London Gazette* (1941–46): on 9 June 1941 G. R. Shea (69541), R.A.F.V.R., was granted a commission for the duration of hostilities as a pilot officer on probation. He was confirmed as a flying officer on 9 June 1942, and on 14 January 1944, he was mentioned in dispatches as a Flight Lieutenant (Acting) R.A.F.V.R. On 4 February 1946, he was discharged on account of medical unfitness.

His fascination with the Irish origins of his name led him, as Captain George Raymond Shea, to compile and present to the British Museum a calligraphically-written pedigree of the family of O'Shea¹³ in 1938. It was also under his birth name of Shea that he enlisted in the RAF. It seems that it was only after the war that he unofficially adopted the form O'Shea instead. In April 1946, as Raymond O'Shea, he signed a contract for his memoir entitled *The Sand Kings of Oman* with the publishers Methuen in London.

His children recall that, before and after the war, he earned his living as a journalist. After working on a plantation in Malaya as a young man, he spent some years editing a weekly review called *Chop Sticks* in Hong Kong. His last job before he died was in Durban as editor of a promotional magazine for Ellis Brown, a coffee and tea company. His family remember him as not hesitating to stretch the truth when producing his journalism copy; for example, they treated with scepticism his claim to have met T. E. Lawrence.¹⁴ O'Shea's background as a journalist and magazine editor is evident in the style in which *The Sand Kings of Oman* is written. But does his reputation for embroidering the truth render it entirely unreliable as a source?

CREDIBILITY OF *THE SAND KINGS OF OMAN* AS AN ACCOUNT OF RAF SHARJAH

Reviews of the book challenged its credibility on the basis that it was riddled with ‘inaccuracies’ (the same word used both by Macro in his reviews and in the reports by the British diplomats in the Gulf). They doubted some of its statements about, for example, oil production statistics, social customs in the Trucial States, and the history of Arabian exploration. These were based on O’Shea’s own extensive reading and his observations while serving in Sharjah. But the critics do not challenge him on those matters with which he was most familiar, namely the life and duties of the Station Manager at an isolated airfield in wartime Arabia. In fact, there is abundant written and photographic evidence that supports O’Shea’s statements about the Sharjah airfield in 1944–45.

For example, on his arrival at the airfield in November 1944, O’Shea describes the building that housed ‘the R.A.F. Station Headquarters, with the U.S. Transport Command’s meteorological building adjoining and, topping them, the square control tower shared by the two Allied Forces’.¹⁵ A building of this description is depicted in an official photograph dated January 1945¹⁶ and in a watercolour painted by Robert Mengel while stationed with the American forces at Sharjah in 1944–45.¹⁷

The open-air cinema inside a canvas-walled enclosure that O’Shea¹⁸ describes appears in other official photographs of the time.¹⁹ Furthermore O’Shea²⁰ describes the RAF officers’ mess as ‘a two-roomed building of coral and palm-matting, with simple saddle-back chairs’. This building, together with the saddleback chairs seen in use both inside and outside on the verandah, is also documented in contemporary photographs (Imperial War Museum CM.6008 and CM.6009, reproduced in Stanley-Price 2102, figs 5.11 and 5.12).²¹

In view of the later charges of fabrication made against O’Shea’s book, it is worth emphasising that the official RAF photographs were classified until relatively recently and therefore could not have been used by an author to describe an airfield that he/she had not personally visited. Similarly, the copious official records of the Indian Political Service (the Trucial States were, *de facto*, a British protectorate at the time) were classified and could not have been made use of for an unauthorised book. Therefore, they constitute an independent source. Compiled as regular fortnightly reports by the local Resident Agent in Sharjah and sent to the Political Agent in Bahrain, the records confirm the reality of several minor events that feature in O’Shea’s book.

Some of these events are mentioned also in four surviving letters written by G. R. Shea while stationed at Sharjah to his brother Leslie

Shea in England. All four letters are addressed from No. 44 Staging Post [Sharjah], R.A.F. PAIFORCE [Persia and Iraq Force], and all are stamped with RAF Censor 368. The letters date between 14 December 1944 and 25 February 1945.

The following are four examples of events described in *The Sand Kings of Oman* and confirmed by other sources:

A. The incident of the Indian running amok

The Sand Kings of Oman, pp. 153–54: ‘An Indian of the Pioneer contingent ran amok and killed a number of people before he committed suicide.. One night he rushed screaming out of his tent while the camp was asleep; two sentries who attempted to stop him were shot, one through the heart, and a military policeman was seriously injured. Shots were fired through the commanding officer’s tent, without doing any damage, however, and the madman, after running two miles into the desert, then proceeded to blow his brains out.’

Trucial Coast News Report, no. 8 for the period ending 30 April 1945: ‘§2. RAF Sharjah. (i). At about 04.00 hours in the morning of the 19th firing broke out in the lines of No. 1261 Indian Pioneer company. The “Alarm” was sounded and the body of a Hindu sepoy was found shot through the head with a service rifle by his side. There were no other casualties although it was found that about 12 shots had been fired into the tent occupied by the company V.C.O.s. At first it appeared that the sepoy had run amok and had committed suicide after trying to murder his Indian officers. Further investigation however revealed what appeared to be a plot by other members of the Company to murder the V.C.O.s’

(O’Shea seems to contradict his own account by first stating that the Indian ‘killed a number of people’ [‘shot’ would have been more accurate], but otherwise the official records confirm the reality of the incident).

B. The incident of the attack on the medical stores

The Sand Kings of Oman, pp. 53–55: ‘On one night in January, however, a daring raid was made on the R.A.F. and American camps and some medical stores stolen The M.O. was suddenly awakened in the early hours of the morning by someone tugging at his blanket The trackers employed by the Sheikh of Sharjah were reputed to be the cleverest in Arabia ... the trackers set off for the hospital, picked up the tracks of the raiders, and were soon galloping off in the desert at a smart pace in the direction of Buraimi’.

Letter dated 25 January 1945, No. 44 Staging Post, R.A.F.

PAIFORCE, from G. R. Shea to his brother Leslie: 'Quite recently the Medical stores was raided and the thieves actually tried to take the blanket from the doctor's bed while he slept. The C.O. complained to the Sheikh who put two of his best trackers at the R.A.F.'s disposal. On camel's back they traced the thieves for miles through the desert ...'.

Trucial Coast News Report, no. 1 for the period ending 18 January 1945, signed by Abdul Razzaq, Resident Agent, Sharjah: 'Report No. 2 records that on the nights of 15 and 18 January thieves broke into the RAF and American Hospitals and removed articles and belongings. A tracker was brought in, who traced the culprits to the Bani Qitab. Some articles were recovered and were given back to the British and US authorities'.

C. The expedition to Ras al-Khaimah

The Sand Kings of Oman, p. 30: 'One of my duties as Station Manager was to visit the emergency alighting area at Ras-al-Khaimah every two months, to inspect the mooring buoys Owing to the bad state of the "roads" beyond Sharjah... it was not possible for us to visit Ras-al-Khaimah until 24th February, 1945.'... [p.31] 'Two vehicles were requisitioned for the journey: a 15-cwt, four-wheeled drive, Western Desert battle-wagon and a Ford V-8 brake or station wagon'.

Letter dated 25th Feb. '45, No. 44 Staging Post, R.A.F. PAIFORCE, from G. R. Shea to his brother Leslie: Describes a visit to the house of Khan Sahib in Ras al-Khaimah: 'I have just come back from a longish trip into the desert – about 200 miles. It was a duty mission but we managed to make a party out of it, setting out in two vehicles, a Service 15cwt truck, and a Ford V-8 "brake-car"'.

D. The rotation of Station Manager in May 1945

The Sand Kings of Oman, p. 192: 'Early in June [1945] I was informed that a passage to England had been obtained for me in a Short "C" class flying-boat, and I made arrangements to hand over to my successor, William Quekett, who had arrived at Sharjah a week previously'.

Trucial Coast News Report, no. 9 for the period ending 15 May 1945: §67. British Interests. Mr J. W. Quekett assumed the duties of Station Manager, BOAC, Sharj ah on 8 May.

In the four examples selected here, there is a close correspondence between incidents described in *The Sand Kings of Oman* and reports in the contemporary official records. Moreover, the letters written by Raymond O'Shea while in Sharjah, reviewed by a censor and then transmitted through the RAF postal service, contain many of the details that he included in his memoir.

The Sand Kings of Oman mentions by name a number of senior British Government officials and naval and military officers who transited the Sharjah airfield during O'Shea's posting. Other British personnel whom he encountered there include Sir Geoffrey Prior, the British Resident in the Gulf; Captain Richard Bird of the Indian Political Service; Basil Lermite and Haji Williamson, both well-known characters in the oil industry in the Trucial States; the entomologist Vernon Joyce who directed the Anti-Locust Commission's work there; and various pilots employed by BOAC who passed through Sharjah while flying the England-India route. Any of these figures could have denounced the book after its publication if the claim of a certain O'Shea to have served (only two years previously) as Station Manager at Sharjah had been spurious. No such denunciations are known.

O'Shea's contract with the publishers Methuen for *The Sand Kings of Oman* is dated April 1946. The book was duly published in 1947 and was reviewed in specialist journals in 1948. The later gossip suggesting that it was fictitious and was put together by officers in the Trucial Oman Scouts overlooks the fact that the Scouts were not formed until 1952 (under the name the Trucial Oman Levies). How could a book published in 1947 be written by officers of a company not created until five years later? The suggestion that it could have been compiled by someone who never visited Oman is refuted by the level of intimate knowledge of real places, events and people described in the book.

In summary, there is no reason to doubt that Raymond O'Shea was posted to RAF Sharjah as Station Manager in 1944–45 and that *The Sand Kings of Oman* is his published memoir about his experiences there. There remain, however, questions concerning the photographic illustrations included in the book.

THE 'LOST CITY' EPISODE AND THE ROLE OF THE PUBLISHERS

As Macro pointed out in one of his reviews, O'Shea seemed to have fallen under the spell of T. E. Lawrence whom he cites admiringly on several occasions. O'Shea himself admitted to a certain romance in his view of Arabia. 'There remained, and does to this day, a tincture of poetry in my outlook'.²² But, he continued, he had been posted to Arabia by the RAF and he had had no personal motive in going there. He confessed to having enjoyed his posting there, and it is true that his enthusiastic account shares a characteristic of many memoirs in sometimes embroidering the truth in the interests of enhancing the narrative. Critics took him to task for factual errors which can perhaps be excused in a text written by a non-specialist that was produced

very quickly after the event without systematic library research. O'Shea was aiming to produce, in his own words, 'simply a travel book, or, perhaps more accurately, a diary' and not 'a geographical, historical or ethnological treatise'.²³

Given the author's modest claims for it, how was it that the 'lost city' episode came to assume such importance in denunciations of the book? It seems that it was far from O'Shea's intention to give his claim about a 'lost city' the prominence that his critics gave it. Instead, it was his publishers who seized on the modest account of his expedition to Liwa to make it a major selling-point when promoting the book.

In the published text, O'Shea devoted a chapter (Chapter XVI) to his Liwa expedition. He confessed that, from the moment he had arrived in the Trucial States, he had been determined to visit the Rub' al-Khali. He was accompanied on the expedition by a Lieutenant Schultz of the US Air Transport Command forces, who were based at Sharjah, and by a number of local guides and guards. A British pilot whom O'Shea met one evening in the mess reported seeing ruins from the air, and this fired O'Shea's enthusiasm to investigate what they might be. His description of a 'derelict town' that the expedition came across is brief.²⁴ It forms part of the overall narrative of his expedition into this remote area. Any claim he makes of an important discovery is limited to a question he puts to himself: 'Was this, I wondered, the "lost city" of the Rub-al-Khali, whose whereabouts has for centuries been a theme of fascinating speculation amongst explorers and travellers?' His answer is: 'The truth we may never know, but any archaeologist who wishes to follow in our footsteps and find this city for himself will doubtless be able to tackle these questions'.²⁵

That is the extent of O'Shea's claims for his 'lost city'. But his publisher saw their potential for promoting the book and gave them a prominence in the book, and in publicity for it, which its author may not have intended. The book contains 16 black-and-white photographic illustrations. They are un-numbered and are not specifically referred to in the text although they do show people and places of the Trucial Coast mentioned in the book. But three of them are patently mis-captioned. One of them is a fine view, taken from Fort Murani, of the harbour front at Muscat in Oman, but it is captioned as 'The harbour at Ras-al-Khaimah, a stronghold of pirates and slave-trades in the 19th century. The Sheikh's palace is in the foreground'. O'Shea was familiar with Ras al-Khaimah and would have known that the caption given to the photograph was not correct.

Another plate shows the Jelali fortress at Muscat but is captioned 'An ancient fortress in the Western Hajar mountains, once the home of the Sheikh of Kalba'. The presence of the sea in the foreground of the photograph should have cast doubt on it as depicting a fortress in the

mountains. Anyone familiar with Muscat would have recognised it for what it was.

The third photograph is the one that prompted the scorn of Wilfrid Thesiger and James Morris and that has, more than anything else, resulted in the lack of faith in O'Shea's memoir. It is a view of the approach road through the mountains to Muscat; the same forts of Murani and Jelali on the harbour's edge are visible in the distance. But its caption reads: 'Ruins of the "Lost City" built on a hill-top at Umm al-'Amad, in the Rub al Khali desert, showing deserted "modern" houses built by later inhabitants.' In describing the site with ruined stone-built houses that he came across in the desert, O'Shea makes no mention of anything resembling 'deserted "modern" houses built by later inhabitants'. Moreover, despite these 'modern' houses being 'deserted', the photograph shows people walking in the roads. I have previously suggested²⁶ that the phrase 'deserted "modern" houses built by later inhabitants' is a gloss added to the caption by the publishers, who could not reconcile a photograph of modern Muscat with O'Shea's description of ruined buildings in the remote desert.

It is hard to believe that the three plates illustrating O'Shea's memoir with views of Muscat were submitted by him – O'Shea himself never visited Muscat.

The publishers' marketing of the search for a lost city is reflected also in the design of the dust-jacket of the published book. The back of the dust-jacket reproduces a map that is published in the book 'showing the author's route' which boldly identifies his goal as Qidan, The Lost City of 'Ad. The front flap of the dust jacket also highlights the 'lost city' theme with the following text: 'One of the most arresting chapters deals with a trip which the author made into an unexplored corner of the mysterious Rub-al-Khali desert, where he and his companions discovered the ruins of a Lost City.' In his text, the author made no claim to have located the city. But the publisher's blurb about a lost city in exotic Arabia would have been a clever marketing ploy in the gloom of postwar Britain.

There are other indications that Methuen as publishers made editorial changes to the author's manuscript in the interests of enhancing its marketability.²⁷ The published memoir is divided into four sections or 'Books'. Each Book has been given an eye-catching header (e.g. 'Desert Warfare', or 'The Pirate Coast') that reflects only a small part of its content. Nowhere in the title, subtitle or Book headers is 'Sharjah' mentioned, despite it being the principal location of the memoirs. The name of Sharjah was then relatively well known in Britain as one of the stops on BOAC's route to India and as an airfield where RAF personnel had been stationed. It is unlikely, therefore, that Methuen omitted the name on the grounds of its obscurity to the

reading public. On the contrary, it would have enhanced its attraction. Whatever the reason for it, the lack of 'Sharjah' in the book's title or subtitle has contributed to its receiving less attention than it deserves as a source for Gulf and aviation history.

Why did O'Shea, who himself had considerable editing experience, accept his publishers' changes and, especially, the inclusion of three photos of Muscat that he had never visited, along with their nonsensical captions? Perhaps his journalistic instincts and romantic streak inclined him to tolerate the publishers' promotion of the 'lost city' episode in the interests of seeing his book sell. Alternatively, could it be that the author never saw the final proofs of the book before its publication? His contract with Methuen gives his only address as c/o Cecil Hunt, a well-known journalist and former Fiction Editor of the *Daily Mail*. Conceivably, O'Shea had left the responsibility for final proof checking in the hands of his fellow editor Hunt, who was acting as his agent. Hunt either did not see the illustrations that Methuen had included or, if he did, he lacked the knowledge of Arabia to object to them. Whatever the source of the three erroneous photographs, Methuen bore some responsibility for not checking their relevance prior to publication.

CONCLUSION

The Sand Kings of Oman was written by Raymond O'Shea as a memoir of his time spent as Station Manager of the British airfield in Sharjah in 1944–45. As a description of the appearance and functioning of a wartime airfield in a remote region of the Arabian Peninsula, it deserves to be used – with a duly critical eye – as a source for Trucial Coast history. (Its reprinting in 2000 by Routledge has made more copies available).

The author can rightly be criticised for some of his factual errors and his statements about Arab society which are at times either inaccurate or demeaning. But, as all memoirs do, it reflects the author's knowledge and prejudices. On the other hand his memoir is one of the rare, first-hand accounts by an expatriate of the Trucial States at this period and therefore merits serious attention.

Responsibility for the deficiencies that led to its being criticised and then largely ignored cannot be attributed entirely to the author. It seems that the publishers exaggerated the author's account of desert exploration as part of their marketing strategy, while simultaneously undermining it by including illustrations that could only lead to ridicule from those familiar with the region. The risks of undue 'hype' in the field of travel writing are well known, and the reputation of

O'Shea's memoir has suffered as a result.

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Did the Elephants Ever Forget?

Peta Rée

In 218 BCE, the Carthaginian general, Hannibal, mounted an attack on the Romans, his army famously crossing the Alps accompanied by elephants. Two thousand and eighty-five years later, the British general, Robert Napier, mounted an attack on the Ethiopian Emperor, negotiating almost equally daunting heights, accompanied by elephants.

The reason for this unlikely war was that Emperor Theodore had taken into captivity, firstly the British Consul to Abyssinia, and in the end every European in the country, and incarcerated them atop the remote mountain fortress of Magdala.

How had this situation come about?

In Abyssinia, now known as Ethiopia, internecine strife was the way of life, with the various chiefs constantly vying for supremacy. The ‘Emperors’ of the time were mere puppets of one warlord or another. However, during the early 1850s, Walter Plowden, the first British Consul to Abyssinia, increasingly wrote in his dispatches to the Foreign Office in London of a certain Kasa, a chief so militarily brilliant that he gradually defeated and killed or imprisoned any rival claimants to power. On 3 March 1855, Kasa had himself crowned as Theodorus, King of Kings. He was, wrote Plowden, ‘persuaded that he is destined to restore the glories of the Ethiopian Empire’. He was ‘of untiring energy, both mental and bodily, his personal and moral daring are boundless ... the worst points of his character are his violent anger at times, his unyielding pride as regards his kingly and divine right, and his fanatical religious zeal’.

Plowden and another Briton, John Bell, became the trusted favourites of the Emperor, but in February 1860, Walter Plowden was attacked and killed and Theodore’s savage vengeance for his friend’s murder was marred by the death, in battle, of John Bell.

Deprived of the moderating counsels of these trusted friends, the mood of the always volatile Theodore became more erratic; his benevolence became more extravagant, his manic furies would propel him into acts of unspeakable cruelty upon his own people.

In 1862, a new British Consul, Charles Cameron, arrived in Abyssinia. In November 1863, much concerned with the possible encroachment of the Egyptians and Ottomans into his territory, Theodore wrote letters to England and France, and possibly to other European powers, soliciting their friendship and, as fellow Christians, to aid him against the Muslims.

Bardel, the French envoy, eventually brought a reply from France. It contained a warning that 'before going to war against powerful neighbours, it is as well to take note of their forces, and to guard against losing any advantage already acquired in rushing into a hazardous undertaking' – but no offer of help.

A few days later, a letter from England arrived addressed not to Theodore but to Cameron by Lord Russell, the Foreign Secretary. It stated bleakly, 'It is not desirable for Her Majesty's Agents to meddle in the affairs of Abyssinia.' He ordered Cameron to return to the coast. Enraged to say the least, by the lack of courtesy, Theodore would have none of it. In May 1864, a pencil note from Cameron reached the Foreign Office, saying that he and Bardel, along with two missionaries, Stern and Rosenthal, who had written slightly of the Emperor, had been put in chains – 'No release until civil answer to King's letter is received'.

On 24 May 1864, a letter was signed by Victoria. It was hardly conciliating, and barely civil:

'Accounts have ... reached us of late that your Majesty had withdrawn your favour from our servant, and had subjected him and many others in whom we feel an interest to treatment which is inconsistent with your profession.

Your Majesty can give no better proof of the sincerity of the sentiments you profess towards us, nor insure more effectually a continuance of our friendship than dismissing Our servant and any other Europeans who may desire it from your court'.

Three weeks later the letter was dispatched with all haste to Egypt.

On 27 July, the steamship *Dalhousie* sailed into Massawa, bearing the letter and the man sent to deliver it to the Emperor. This was Hormuzd Rassam, an Iraqi Christian, First Assistant Secretary to the British Resident at Aden. Rassam was accompanied by Lieutenant William Prideaux and Dr Henry Blanc. In the steamy port of Massawa, the mission waited for a summons from Theodore – and waited – and waited.

It was August 1865 before Theodore wrote, and not until 15

October that Rassam and his companions set off from the coast. In the last week of January 1866, they topped a low ridge and saw, in the midst of thousands and thousands of black tents, the white pavilion of the Emperor.

Amazingly, the day after the lavish reception of the mission, Theodore told them, 'For the sake of my friend, the Queen, and in return for the trouble you have taken in the matter of Mr Cameron, I will pardon all the European captives'.

On the distant mountain top of Magdala, the chains were struck from the prisoners' limbs and they slowly made their way back to join all the other Europeans. Though not in chains, these were just as effectually the prisoners of the Emperor. On 18 April 1866, they began the journey to the coast.

But when Rassam, Prideaux and Blanc went to bid farewell to the Emperor, they were suddenly arrested. Theodore could not bear to let them go from under his hand without a promise of a rich reward and guns, engines and artisans from the British Government.

Martin Flad, one of the missionaries, whose wife and children were among the hostages, was sent to England with a letter setting out the Emperor's 'requests', and also a letter from Rassam, most carefully phrased since he knew Theodore would see it: 'Your Lordship will perceive that we are all detained in this country for the present, for friendship's sake'.

Sent back to Abyssinia, with armaments and artisans, Flad's instructions from the Foreign Office were to go up alone to Theodore to tell him that he could only have them when the hostages had reached the coast. So he arrived on 16 April, bearing only conditions. Furious, Theodore arrested the entire European community, destroyed their village and moved them to his chief town, Bedra Tabor. Flad stepped through 10-foot high hedges to join his wife and children and the rest in captivity.

On 13 June, a letter from the British Government informed Theodore that unless the hostages reached Massawa in three months there would be no more concessions, no more talking. In mid-August, as a response to this ultimatum had not been received, the Government decided that no option remained but to use force. The most economical place from which to mount an attack was India. That same day, a telegram was dispatched to Bombay, appointing Lieutenant General Napier, Military Commander-in-Chief in India, to lead the expedition. Napier was firmly instructed: 'You will be careful to avoid unnecessary expenditure.' But Napier, mindful of the disastrous muddle of the Crimean campaign ten years earlier, had no intention of allowing any cost-saving measure to jeopardise efficiency or the lives of his men.

Success in an expedition to Abyssinia was considered by many to be impossible. It had to traverse nearly 400 miles in an inhospitable climate over a difficult, mountainous terrain – and make its way back to the coast before the rainy season began.

All too often, commanders fall short of the calls made upon them, either from ignorance, inexperience or even stupidity. Not so Napier. He had been, in effect, in training all his military life for this challenge. Born in Sri Lanka in 1810, of a military family, he had entered the Bengal Engineers as a cadet. Over the next 40 years, he built up a vast experience of constructing roads and railways. In the China campaign of 1860, he had been in charge of the lines of communication.

Not much was known about the interior of Abyssinia. The Bombay Asiatic Society's Library was scoured for information from the writings of James Bruce and Henry Salt, among others, and Government reports were scanned.

Travelling inland from the coast, it was learned that the first 30–40 miles consisted of low-lying desert country that was wretchedly hot. There then followed a series of more or less precipitous passes, before a tableland was reached, lying at 8–9,000 ft above sea level.

The way to Magdala lay across country alternating between fertile fields, rocky barren tracts and mountainous passes and defiles. The mountains rose to be between 10 and 15,000 ft – 'the whole country being broken and tossed about in a remarkable degree'.

Napier worked out the logistics of the march in reverse, looking back from a front line force before Magdala of 5,000 fighting men and down a supply line 381 miles long, through depots and posts protected by 7,000 fighting men, to a coastal base supplied by one route from the Red Sea from Suez and a second across the Indian Ocean from Bombay.

Napier first sent a 'Reconnoitering Party', a small team, commanded by Colonel Merewether, the Resident of Aden, and other officers known to be practical men. They were dispatched to select a suitable landing place for an army. Arriving at Massawa on 26 September 1867, they quickly settled on Zulla on Annesley Bay, where there were ample water supplies and an open plain, ideal for a large encampment. The troops and horses were landed on 5 October, and an exploration of possible routes to the highlands began. A pier was built to allow ships to be unloaded directly to the shore. From it, a light railway was constructed, running 14 miles inland to a base camp at Koomaylee, at the bottom of the Suru Pass, called by the troops the Devil's Staircase, for its hellish chaos of boulders.

Meanwhile, supplies had been gathering, in stores in Suez and Bombay, including a telegraph system. Money would be needed in

Abyssinia to pay for food and forage. Since the only acceptable currency in the country was the Maria Theresa dollar, which had not been minted for years, the Imperial Mint in Vienna agreed to start production, the silver to be provided by Britain.

In all, 75 steamers, 205 sailing ships and 11 smaller craft were used to transport the expedition across the ocean. Three hospital ships were to be stationed on the coast, fitted out with Bibles, prayer books and 80 volumes of 'general literature'. 'Medical comforts' included two dozen pints of port wine, ten dozen cases of champagne and five dozen quarts of gin. Bandages and medicines were not listed; perhaps they were considered to be of 'use' rather than 'comfort'.

Never had a military force been better provided, for.

All the troops in that force, but for some Royal Engineers, were taken from India, and all superior officers, except from the British Medical Department, came from British regiments serving in India and from the Indian Staff Corps.

Altogether, the expedition consisted of some 62,000 men – but of these only 13,088 were troops, about one third Europeans and two thirds Indians. The remaining 50,000-odd people were camp followers of more or less necessary kinds: muleteers, labourers, servants and traders.

As the expedition was to be in Abyssinia for a while, it was deemed sensible to gain up-to-date knowledge of this relatively unknown country, so with the expedition also marched the geographer Clements Markham, Richard Holmes, an archaeologist from the British Museum, a zoologist and a meteorologist. Then there were the photographers, specially trained members of the 10th Company of Royal Engineers, who were to march with the headquarters camp, photographing views as well as surveying the onward route and reporting with prints to the commanding officers of each corps before the next day's march. The writers of the official report, Major Holland and Captain Hozier, in the circumstances, rather churlishly remarked of the photographic views, 'It is to be regretted that rather more professional and artistic knowledge was not brought to bear on the subject. Some beautiful effects of light and shade were lost, owing to the views not having been taken at the proper time of day.'

As there were many European nationals among the captives, non-combatant observers, army and naval officers from Prussia, Austria, France, Italy, Holland and Spain marched with the army. There were also journalists: George Henry is best known now as the author of boys' adventure stories; Henry Morton Stanley for his famous meeting with Dr Livingston in the middle of Africa; while William Simpson was also an artist. There were more artists among the army officers,

including Captain Frank James and Major Robert Baigrie.

And then, there were the animals, an essential form of transport in a country where wheels could frequently not make their way. Of those deployed 5,735 were camels, 8,075 bullocks and 17,943 mules and ponies. Most of these animals were found in Abyssinia, or collected from many places in the Near East and landed initially at Alexandria. The cavalry horses came from India, many no doubt the personal mounts of the officers.



Figure 13.1: Elephants on the march. From the Illustrated London News 1868.

Last, but very much not least, were the elephants (Fig. 13.1). Forty-four came from Calcutta, with cradles and equipment to carry or draw the guns of a battery, or to carry 5½-inch cannon. Each elephant had its personal *mahout* or driver and a coolie. Its daily food allowance was 4 lbs of gram, 20 lbs of rice or flour, 2½ oz of salt, 175 lbs of hay or kirben and 40 gallons of water.

And how do you get an elephant to walk a gangplank between ship and shore? The answer is you do not; you employ cranes and slings.

Of course, despite the best-laid plans, some things are bound to go wrong. The mules were perhaps the worst sufferers. Eight thousand arrived at Zulla – but with no pack saddles. An order was rushed back to England, but it took three tries before the heavy Otago saddle was adopted as only the best of a bad job. Many of the muleteers deserted, eventually to be replaced by 5,000 reliable Punjabis. Many mules were abandoned and wandered confusedly through the camp.

Then disease struck, and the animals started dying. Their bodies littered the camp, along with those of dozens of worn-out camels and

it was necessary to burn the corpses on a daily basis. As soon as possible, a mule hospital was established about 7 miles inland, giving a degree of care that the poor animals had been little accustomed to in their native places. Still, the losses were terrible.

Troops had been arriving in installments since late October, but it was 3 January 1868 before Napier stepped on shore to take overall command. And it was the 27th before enough forward camps were in place for him to begin his march towards Magdala.

But would he be in time?

Eight months earlier, in a smuggled letter to Colonel Merewether, Dr Henry Blanc had stated unequivocally that should Theodore execute even *one* of the captives ‘the fate of all the Europeans in this country would be sealed; he has done every kind of injury to the white men except spilling their blood; but the day he throws away all restraint and gives licence to his passions he knows that he is done for – that blood calls for blood, and that he has not even pity to expect, he will therefore before seeking safety in flight, murder every white man in his power’.

It was a gruelling march. Magnificent as the beetling cliffs and deep ravines might be, easy to traverse they were not. As one soldier grumbled, ‘They tell us this is a tableland – if it is, they have turned the table upside down, and we are scrambling up and down the legs.’ How the elephants, heavy laden with huge guns, did not slip from narrow paths from which the mules sometimes fell, is a tribute to the careful and sure-footed ways of the great beasts.

There is no doubt that had the locals been hostile, the expedition probably would have failed, but most of the country people, by now longing to be rid of the tyrant, even helped, at least to the extent of bringing in forage and provisions, especially since they were paid, not a thing they were used to from an Abyssinian Army on the march. In many places, the local inhabitants sat at the wayside to see the mad strangers in their scarlet coats go by accompanied by the huge and amenable elephants.

Even from the start, troops were made to leave behind most of the baggage and the camp followers that were usual on a campaign, and as Magdala drew nearer, they shed still more – with only the barest necessities being allowed on the final march.

At the beginning of April, Napier’s attacking force was assembled on the plateau of Dalanta. As the first elephant struggled up the cliff road after midnight, her feet slipped, her load tilted on her back, and very slowly she began to slide. She slid about 60 yards or so, scattering the others and coming to a halt just as she was about to plunge into the abyss. Even after she was rescued, none of her sisters would move

until they had been unloaded.

The prospect was magnificent, cliffs and gorges as far as the eye could reach, and 'above all, rose Magdala, like a great ship out of the surrounding billows'.

From Magdala, they were close enough for Theodore to see through his telescope the 'white donkeys' who had come to attack him.

On 10 April, the troops made a difficult way across the intervening gorge to the plain of Arogee. One cannon shot screamed over their heads, then suddenly the slopes above were a mass of running warriors. Such was the disparity in gunpowder between English and Abyssinians that the outcome was a dreadful certainty. As Markham wrote, 'They were mown down in lines, and unable to get in range themselves. Led on by their gallant old General ... they returned again and again with great bravery. But it was like a man struggling against machinery – the most heroic courage could do nothing in the face of such vast inequality of arms'. The British soldiers themselves were horrified at the carnage.

Early next day, Theodore sent down Lieutenant Prideau and Martin Flad, to sue for 'reconciliation'. They were sent back (many feared to their death) with Napier's ultimatum – the King must submit to the Queen of England and bring all the Europeans to the British camp.

Theodore decided to release his hostages and on Easter Sunday, 12 April, the long column came slowly down into the camp. The British were surprised – dare one say disappointed – when they had expected mere chain-scarred skeletons – to note that so few showed any signs of hardship; but even the chief offenders, who had spent long months in chains, had, unlike Theodore's Abyssinian prisoners, been able to grow or purchase food. Of the 57 captives, ten were wives, all but three half or wholly Abyssinian and 23 were children, who were joined next day by the newborn Theodore Horitz. Pauline Flad's daughter was born 12 days later. There were also, according to Stanley, 187 servants and 323 animals.

Markham commented, 'Never was a surrender, when once resolved upon, so freely and unreservedly made. Not a hostage, not a child, not a box was kept back. It was the act of a king, an act without cunning or treachery, however slight soever, to mar its fullness'.

But Theodore had not intended his act as a surrender. He was a king who could *never* surrender. And Napier felt the insult to Britain was such that he could accept nothing less. He sent one last message, still promising honourable treatment in return for surrender, but otherwise a final assault.

On 13 April, the British troops stormed the citadel, meeting little resistance (Fig. 13.2). Theodore dismissed his surviving followers and shot himself through the mouth, poignantly with a pistol given him by

Victoria in gratitude for his treatment of Walter Plowden. He was buried with respect by his priests, with two missionaries attending, but few of his old chiefs.

Regrettably, the treasures of Magdala were looted, most auctioned, and the money given to the troops. The British Museum was the keenest purchaser. Napier then set fire to the settlement (Fig. 13.3).

Now the long journey back to the coast began, the difficulties exacerbated by the fact that the rains had begun, that both men and animals were exhausted and that local inhabitants began occasionally to pick off stragglers (Fig. 13.4). At each former camp, its guardians and previously abandoned possessions were picked up. At Dildi, the elephants – too weak to carry on much further – were rested for a day.

By early June, the army was gradually embarking for Zulla to make its way back to India or England. All the mules still living were left behind, but all the elephants, with the exception of five that had died of exhaustion, returned to India. Back in India, did these elephants, as they stood in their lines at night, gently clanking their ankle chains, whisper to each other of their adventures so far away? Did the elephants ever forget?



Figure 13.2: Capture of Magdala. From the Illustrated London News 1868.



Figure 13.3: Magdala in flames, seen from Selassie. From the Illustrated London News 1868.

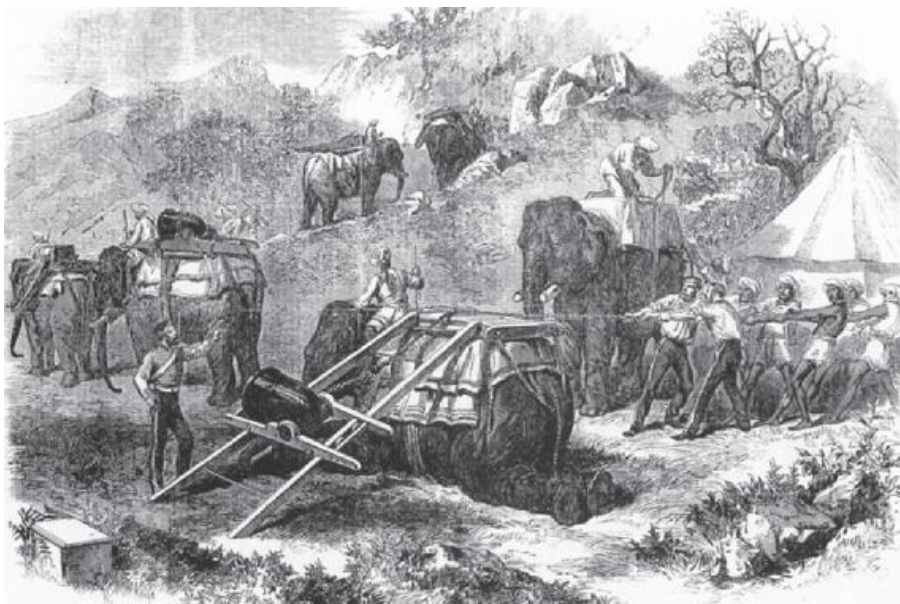


Figure 13.4: Return of the army from Magdala: the Elephant Train. From the Illustrated London News 1868.

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The Admiral's Daughter

John Thompson

Like so many journeys of adventure and discovery, it began with one small step when I purchased an old, hand-coloured lithograph print entitled 'The Daughter of Admiral Walker' (Fig. 14.1). The reason for my purchase was sparked by my interest in textiles, particularly those from Turkey, and the portrait of a young child of around four years of age dressed in traditional Turkish costume seemed an ideal choice to supplement my collection.

When the lithographic print arrived, I was more than happy with my purchase, and the details of it having been produced from an 1840 original by Sir David Wilkie during his stay in Constantinople and subsequently reproduced as a lithograph in a book entitled *Sir David Wilkie's Sketches in Turkey, Syria & Egypt, 1840 & 1841*, published in London in 1843, further intrigued me. The seller had dated my print as c. 1850 but I was curious about the unnamed subject.

Sir David Wilkie RA (Royal Academician), the prolific Scottish artist, had set off in the autumn of 1840 to travel to the Near East and, travelling through Holland and Germany, arrived in Constantinople (Istanbul), where he was detained for several months due to military unrest in Syria which made it unsafe to travel. During that time, Wilkie sailed to Smyrna (Izmir) where he continued to paint and sketch, and after the seaways were considered safe, he travelled on to Jerusalem. He subsequently continued his journey to Egypt where, at Alexandria, he painted a portrait of Mehmet Ali, the Khedive of Egypt, which was the last portrait he worked on.



Figure 14.1: The daughter of Admiral Walker, an engraving from a lithograph after a drawing by Sir David Wilkie, 1840.

As part of his tour, Wilkie had been commissioned as Royal Painter to produce a portrait of Sultan Abdülmecid, then aged 17, for Queen Victoria. These monarchs must have been two of the youngest rulers

in world history, whose control of vast empires almost divided the globe between them.

Abdülmeceid had become Sultan of the Ottoman Empire at the age of 16 in 1839, and Queen Victoria took the throne in 1837, aged 18, and became the head of an expanding British Empire. In 1840, the British Empire had just acquired Hong Kong from China, formalised the constitution of New Zealand and established the Canadian Parliament. The Ottoman Empire covered much of Eastern Europe and the Near East including Egypt and Syria as well as Asia Minor (modern day Turkey).

Relations between the United Kingdom and the Ottoman court had been established since the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. The Ottoman Tanzimât reform movement began in 1839 and opened the Ottoman Empire up to establishing closer links with western nations. This included military advice and training in support of the Ottoman Army and Navy. During the 1840s, the Ottoman court had an ambassador in London, Mehmed Emin Ali Pasha, who sought to strengthen trade and diplomatic ties between the two countries.

The portrait of Sultan Abdülmeceid painted by Wilkie remains in the Royal Collection and now hangs in Kensington Palace, London.

While he was in Istanbul, Wilkie received a visit from John Frederick Lewis, who was an admirer of his work and had taken the opportunity to travel from Europe to meet him. It was Lewis who suggested the 'mixed media' technique of bodycolour and watercolour that Wilkie had perfected. Wilkie experimented and used this technique effectively in the portraits he produced during his stay in Istanbul. However, he did have problems with the quality of the paper, which affected the finished result.

Among the portraits made by Wilkie, while in Istanbul, were those of Admiral Walker and his young daughter.

Admiral Walker, who later became known as Sir Baldwin Wake-Walker 1st Baronet, was the British commander of the Ottoman Navy and known to the Turks as Yavır Pasha or Walker Bey. Admiral Walker had lived in Turkey since 1836 with his wife and children. Several of his 11 children were born in Turkey, although not all of them survived to maturity.

Wilkie spent a great deal of time in the company of Admiral Walker and other ex-patriates. He recounts that Admiral Walker suited his Turkish attire well recording that 'he is a fine looking man, becomes the Turkish dress well, and his wife is a most lady-like woman. They have a house here, and we see them frequently'.

When Wilkie drew the portrait of Emily in Turkish costume she was then aged three, having been born in Constantinople in 1837. It is recorded that Emily was brought for her portrait sitting in a basket

accompanied by a Mrs Redhouse and a Greek governess.

The portrait of Admiral Wake-Walker's daughter shows the detail of traditional Turkish female costume: loose trousers known as 'şalvar', an open overdress called an 'etek', a head dress with a gauze veil and leather slippers. The materials used for the clothes would have included silk and satin cloth, as well as cotton fabrics produced in Turkey. It had been common practice for Europeans to adopt 'oriental dress' while in Turkey, although this practice was actively discouraged in later years by the British establishment. The child also wears a serious, if bemused, expression, perhaps due to the strange attire and the circumstance of posing for her portrait. Wilkie commented:

'In Constantinople the dress of the children is striking, from its resemblance to that of the Turkish women, who may be supposed skilled in making the most of whatever graces belong to it – a management which children cannot so easily acquire. There is generally no distinction in dress between the child of three and the woman of mature years. They are set forth with the same jewels and in the same fashion. The dresses of both are composed of one identical material, a difference only being recognised in quality'.

The publisher of the portrait of Admiral Walker's daughter states that 'the figure, however, is an admirable study describing perfectly the exterior items of the female costume. This sketch is of remarkable beauty, and one (on) which the accomplished artist has bestowed much care. It is not to be surpassed by any similar sketches of the great masters'.

Wilkie also produced a sketched portrait of Admiral Walker in mixed media. When Admiral Walker was called away to deal with the problems in Syria and Egypt and had set sail for Alexandria, Wilkie called on Mrs Walker to present her with Admiral Walker's portrait.

During his enforced stay in Turkey, Wilkie took the opportunity to draw and paint portraits of other local dignitaries and members of the British community in Istanbul, including the British Ambassador Mr Cartwright and Ottoman subjects, such as Sotiri, dragoman of Mr Colquhoun, British Consul-General at Bucharest, and Captain Leigh and his Dragoman.

Wilkie paid great attention to costume and detail in the posed portraits that provide a time capsule of a moment in history when various individuals were living in Turkey. Some of the portraits were unfinished because they would have been intended as initial works to be developed later into more involved portraits in oils. Wilkie paid great attention to the detail of costume that other orientalist painters would later continue to develop.

As reported by the editor of his life and journals, it is estimated that in the time he spent in Istanbul Wilkie produced at least 53 portraits and sketches in Pera and, in addition to his official portraits, another

six works. Some of these were later reproduced as lithographs; for example, Admiral Walker's Daughter, Mr Colquhoun Consul at Bucharest, Sotiri the dragoman of Mr Colquhoun and Madame Josephina, landlady of the Casa Giuseppina, Constantinople.

After the crisis abated, Wilkie continued his journey and travelled to Smyrna arriving on 15 January 1841. He writes in his journal, 'We found Smyrna in point of society most agreeable'.

Wilkie was very much taken with Smyrna and stayed at the Naval Hotel. He found the main differences between Smyrna and Constantinople were the 'prevalence of English people, of English furniture, of English appointments of the table, chimneys and Newcastle coal'. On arrival in Smyrna, Wilkie felt that he had finally reached his goal. He wrote, 'Smyrna is the first city we have reached on our journey that is mentioned in Scripture ... We may therefore (be) said to have reached the outskirts of the Holy Land'.

Wilkie was later a guest of Mr and Mrs Charlton Whittall and Mr James Whittall and family at Bornova. On 23 January 1841, he recorded in his journal, 'Went with Mr Whittall in a boat to the head of the Gulf of Smyrna; then walked about two miles; then mounted on donkeys, on which we reached the village of Bonobat [Bornova]. Found it a beautiful specimen of a Turkish village. ... Came to the magnificent villa of Mr. Whittall; greatly pleased with it had lunch in superb style'.

While a guest of the Whittalls, he produced three known works – one of which, featuring camels and their driver, was produced as a lithograph. The camels were brought into the garden of the Whittall mansion known as 'the big house', which is now the Rectorate building of Izmir's Aegean University. He also sketched Mrs Whittall's dragoman.

On 28 and 29 January 1841, Wilkie also found time to sketch and paint a young child – young James William Whittall, who was later to become Sir William Whittall. One of the portraits shows the child with his nurse and another, the child on his own in costume. This child was three years old at the time, and again great detail is paid to the costume, which is variously referred to as Greek or oriental.

Wilkie left Smyrna on 31 January 1841 and proceeded to Beirut and then to Jerusalem and Egypt. As he left Smyrna, he met Admiral Walker's fleet of 18 ships near Marmaris on their return from Egypt. Wilkie's ship was able to anchor at Marmaris, but due to quarantine regulations, he could not board any of the Admiral's ships, though he heard the ship's band playing Strauss waltzes as Admiral Walker waved his handkerchief as a sign of farewell.

Continuing his journey through Palestine and to Jerusalem, Wilkie completed several paintings and scenes. Reaching Egypt, at

Alexandria, he completed his portrait of Mehmet Ali, the Khedive of Egypt before setting off on the return journey to England.

On 1 June 1841, Wilkie died on board ship near Gibraltar, aged 56. He had spent the last eight months of his life in the Levant. While Wilkie mentioned various minor health problems related to stomach upsets and headaches during his travels, nothing appeared to be a source of worry. However, the cause of his death remains unclear. Although he suffered from recurrent stomach problems, his doctor suggested as a possible cause that he had 'indulged imprudently in drinking iced lemonade, and in eating fruit at Malta'.

Permission was denied for Wilkie's body to be brought ashore at Gibraltar, so he had to be buried at sea. The burial was portrayed by his friend, the artist J. M. W. Turner, albeit that he was not an eyewitness. Entitled *Peace: Burial at Sea*, the painting is one of a pair made by Turner soon after the death of his father. The other painting, entitled *War: The Exile and the Rock Limpet*, portrays the exiled Napoleon contemplating his reflection in a rock pool.

Wilkie's journals for the eight months that he spent in the Levant give a charming insight into the lives of individuals of the time and provide a view of the Near East through the eyes of a new traveller. His paintings and portraits remain today as a lasting legacy of the people he met and the places he visited, and subsequent biographies about Wilkie offer a great deal of additional information.

To find the connection with the subject of my lithograph, research quickly led me to Admiral Sir Baldwin Wake-Walker, 1st Baronet (1802–76). Baldwin Wake-Walker was the eldest son of John Walker of Whitehaven and Frances Wake daughter of Captain Drury Wake. Wake-Walker followed a distinguished naval career, entering the Royal Navy, according to the records, at the age of ten in 1812 and rising to the rank of Lieutenant by 1820. In the late 1830s, he received permission from the Admiralty to accept a command in the Turkish Navy, where he was known as Walker Bey and Yavir Pasha. In Turkish, 'Yavir' or 'Yaver' means adjutant or aide-de-camp, which confirms his position as executive advisor to the Ottoman Navy. He served in this capacity from around 1836 to 1845. He was accompanied to Turkey by his wife and children, and more children were born there.

It was customary for the Ottoman Empire to employ the skills and knowledge of military leaders and commanders from outside their own ranks. The Admiral would have worked at the new Naval School and Hospital, which was opened in 1838 in the Kasimpaşa district of Istanbul and is known in Turkish as Mekteb-i Bahriye. While he was in Istanbul, Admiral Walker also commissioned paintings of the locations known to him, such as the Naval School and Hospital.

In July 1840, a crisis arose when the Turkish fleet was detained in Egypt on the orders of Mehmet Ali, who was attempting to assert his greater authority and independence in Egypt and establish a dynasty separate from that of the Ottoman Empire. Admiral Walker convened a Council of War that restricted any movement at sea, and this resulted in Sir David Wilkie and other foreign nationals being detained in Constantinople for several months. The crisis was averted when the ships were released as Admiral Walker set the Ottoman fleet on course for Egypt. Admiral Walker subsequently commanded the Turkish Navy at the bombardment of Acre in November 1840. For this action, he received awards from Turkey, Austria, Russia and Prussia, as well as being created Knight Commander of the Order of Bath on 12 January 1841.

Admiral Walker served for several more years with the Ottoman Navy and his daughters Emily (b. 1837), Caroline (1838–40), Frances Catherine (1840–41), Florence (b. 1842) and Evelyn Laura (b. 1844) are noted as having been born in Istanbul.

Admiral Walker was awarded the honorary title of Pasha by the Ottoman Empire accompanied by the appropriate medal and decoration. Recent generations of Wake-Walkers have used the title of 'Hereditary Pasha of the Ottoman Empire', although this is technically not a hereditary title. Admiral Walker returned to England in 1845 to resume his duties with the British Navy.

Admiral Walker served as Controller of the Navy from 1847 to 1860 and was responsible for overseeing the introduction of new designs for naval vessels. Although he was resistant to the introduction of iron-hulled vessels, believing that they would never replace the traditional wooden constructions, he later accepted their introduction. His continued distinguished naval career resulted in him being created a baronet and he took the title Sir Baldwin Wake-Walker of Oakfield House in 1856.

The portraits of Admiral Walker and that of his daughter remained in the family until the death of the 4th Baronet in 2005, when they were sold at Sotheby's in London in 2007, as were the scenes of Constantinople that he had commissioned, including a view of the *Golden Horn*, *A Street Scene in Constantinople* and the *View of the Naval Hospital and Burial Ground*.

The works that Wilkie produced during his travels appeared posthumously in a volume titled *David Wilkie Sketches in Turkey, Syria and Egypt 1840 & 1841 'Drawn on stone by Joseph Nash'* and published in 1843 by Graves and Warmley. Included are the portraits *Admiral Walker's Daughter* and *Admiral Walker*. Admiral Walker's portrait shows him wearing a Turkish military fez. It is interesting that, although a series of prints was included in the finished volume, the

only one I have found for sale recently has been that of the Admiral's daughter.

As to the subsequent history of the little girl portrayed in oriental dress: the records show that Admiral Walker married Mary Catherine Sinclair Worth only daughter of Commander John Worth RN of Oakley House, Suffolk, in September 1834. They had a total of five sons, two of whom inherited the baronetcy, one following the death of the other, and six daughters.

Emily Walker was born in Istanbul in 1837 and would have been around three years of age at the time her portrait was made. In 1870, she married the Reverend William Francis Peel, a widowed Church of England rector, at Hoxne, Suffolk, and lived in the parish of Burghwallis, near Doncaster. She died in 1916, and family sources have confirmed that Emily is the girl in the portrait. Emily was mother to her husband's children from his first marriage as well as having children of their own.

A fifth daughter, Florence Charlotte, was born in Istanbul in 1842, and she married Charles Robertson in 1875 and died in 1920. Another surviving daughter was Evelyn Laura Walker, who was born in Istanbul in 1844. She married Captain Hugh Talbot Burgoyne in 1864 and survived him when he was killed at sea off Cape Finisterre in 1870 while in command of HMS *Captain*. She lived in Hoxne, Suffolk where she died in 1889.

His sons followed Admiral Walker into the Navy and Wake-Walkers could be found on active service up to the Second World War and include the Admiral's grandson, Sir Frederic Wake-Walker (1888–1945), who served in both the First and Second World Wars.

The 1830s and '40s had represented a time of harmony between the Ottoman Empire and Europe. In 1841, Stratford Canning was appointed to Istanbul, where he had previously served from 1825 to 1828 and briefly in 1831. Stratford Canning's time in office (1841–58) saw a shift in the relations between the United Kingdom, the European Powers and the Ottoman Empire. The outbreak of the Crimean War in 1853 resulted in a further deterioration in relations with the Ottoman Empire and, by the 1860s and '70s, the Ottoman Empire was no longer viewed as a strong ally on an equal footing but rather as a prize to be divided up between the nations of Great Britain, France, Germany, Russia and others.

To know the identity of the girl in the portrait was not essential, but the research has shown how an interesting historical moment in time – of a British naval family living in Turkey in the 1840s – has been captured forever.

Grateful thanks to David Wake-Walker and Edward Wake-Walker of the Wake-Walker family for their support and information in the preparation of this article.

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A Swiss Egyptologist on Her Majesty's Service: Edouard Naville (1844–1926) in the Delta

Hélène Virenque

My current research focuses on over 250 letters retained in the archives of the Egypt Exploration Society in London. The letters begin with the first contact between the Swiss Egyptologist Edouard Naville 1844–1926 (Fig. 15.1) and Amelia B. Edwards and Reginald S. Poole, both founders and secretaries of the Egypt Exploration Fund, as it was originally named, and they represent a steady exchange of information from 1879 until the end of his excavations in the Nile Delta in 1892.

Thanks to an EES Centenary Award, during 2011, it was possible to digitise all the Naville letters in the archive. Currently, I am transcribing them while carrying out research that will inform the historical and archaeological context in my supplementary comments.¹ Hopefully this work will result in a publication.

Written in perfect English and fortunately in a beautiful handwriting, the letters reveal many details about Naville's methods and his collaboration with Flinders Petrie.

METHODS AND AIMS IN ARCHAEOLOGY ACCORDING TO NAVILLE

It is well known that when he arrived in Lower Egypt in 1883, Edouard Naville was not an archaeologist but an epigraphist working on behalf of the Egypt Exploration Fund. The previous year, he had gained his first but short experience – something between excitement and fear – by following Gaston Maspero in Upper Egypt. In the Delta, he started his own researches in order to find evidence of the Exodus, a biblical approach he shared with the founders of the Fund. This area was already known thanks to Heinrich Brugsch's work.² However,

Naville was the first to have the time and the money, but also the pressure of the secretaries and the subscribers, behind him: his purpose was to establish a link between the biblical account, the Egyptian toponymy and the local designations.



Figure 15.1: Portrait of Edouard Naville. © Archive of the Naville family.

Travelling on a donkey, Naville carried out his surveys in search of the best spot to excavate in Wadi Tumilat. In 1885, he wrote: 'By the way I can tell you that I went to Zagazig on a donkey exploring the

bank of the canal where I found a most important place to excavate'.³

He also talked with farmers or local chiefs, who provided him with information about antique tells/mounds or inscribed stones that had been re-used in their houses.

For his first excavations, Naville turned his attention towards the eastern side of Wadi Tumilat, where he had contacts with former French engineers of the Suez Canal, such as Achille Jaillon (his future foreman in Bubastis) and also with an enigmatic figure, Count Riamo d'Hulst.⁴ This somewhat unusual team led major excavations at Tell el Maskhuta, Saft el-Hennah, Bubastis (Fig. 15.2) and Tell el-Yahoodieh. Francis Ll. Griffith, then a young Egyptologist, also served from time to time as Naville's assistant. It is, however, through the letters that we learn of Naville spending a lot of time in his tent or in a hotel in Cairo while his assistants carried out the excavations or arranged transport for the artefacts. Naville considered that the main part of his work was simply to choose the places to dig and then to translate the inscriptions.



1888
Sunday February 12th.

Dear Miss Edwards.

I arrived here on Thursday morning and I
am making my preparations for setting out
Dart on Wednesday. The first thing I enquired
about was the permission for excavating. Although
I wrote to Giebelant long ago he did not hear any thing
with Beyrout when he went to Upper Egypt, so I had
to go to Mourieff who told me to go and begin my work
and that he would arrange the thing with Giebelant. I
saw M. M. Geyon, Comte d'Hellet and Griffith.
Griffith has returned from Soudan, and is now engaged

Figure 15.2: Letter from Edouard Naville to Amelia Edwards, 12 February 1888. © Egypt Exploration Society, Lucy Gara Archive (V.f.1).

One wonders, because of Naville's lack of experience, whether this work could really be called 'excavation'. Naville was limited by the general way excavations were conducted at that time and by his collaborators' better understanding of the 'civil engineering' aspects

that needed to be considered when supervising a major dig. For him, it was all about 'pits' and 'trenches'. In January 1885, at Khataaneh he wrote to Poole, 'There are Greek and Roman settlements; but underneath there is a large mass of brickwork of Pharaonic time well-built with white cement between the bricks. I am cutting through it in two or three places. It may be a dyke, it may be a platform for a temple, anyhow I want to go to the bottom'.⁵

Even if Naville sometimes mentioned the mud-brick or stone structures that he discovered, he simply did not draw them on the plans included in his publications. Without these drawings, his work overlooks many serious points especially on such an important site as Bubastis, as is shown by the published plan.⁶

Along with this approach, Naville wished to discover as many inscriptions as possible in order to propose a new geographical description of the Eastern Delta. Any other discovery was secondary to him. In 1885, still in Khataaneh, he explained:

'I was very much pleased to have Petrie's visit. He came on Tuesday night, and spent the Wednesday with me, we had time to look carefully over all the work. I was very glad to have his advice because he knows remarkably well everything connected with the pottery, which is the only thing I found [...] Mr Petrie was very much interested in the new style of pottery and in the part of one being certain that it belongs to the thirteenth dynasty; as dated pottery is rare; but I should have much preferred to find inscriptions, the smallest fragment with a geographical name'.⁷

This subject was regularly brought up in the correspondence: after his first excavations, Naville was disappointed by the small objects he found and did not want to disappoint both secretaries as well. Indeed, his plates, contrary to Petrie's, who was digging at the same time in the Delta (and sometimes at the same sites right after him), included mainly inscriptions and almost no small finds or pottery. He mentioned some scarabs and coins in the text, but did not draw or describe this kind of material in detail. Later, Naville left to Griffith the task of drawing the small finds, which the latter did in the Tell el Yahoudieh memoir. In April 1885, in a letter to Poole, Naville even apologised for these discoveries and explained, 'Please to unpack as you like the box of little things which will look very poor near the forty two boxes of Petrie. Fortunately I have got the statue [i.e. Nectanebos' the First statue from Saft el-Henneh, British Museum EA 1013] because I feel rather ashamed of the rest'.⁸

NAVILLE'S METHODS IN COMPARISON WITH PETRIE'S

Naville's methods could not be more different from those of Petrie and

the evolution of their relationship was clearly influenced by their respective works in Lower Egypt and later still in Upper Egypt.⁹

In the beginning, their differences did not represent a problem: on the contrary, one complimented the other. Naville edited Petrie's translations, while Petrie advised him to dig in one place or another and then came on site to have a look at the pottery. In his letters, Naville talked about their respective interests, but he already appeared to have been worried about potential future conflicts. For instance in 1886, after having edited Petrie's proofs, he explained:

'I believe a complete division of labour would be the best thing. Pottery, small things, weights, plans, measurements are the field of Petrie in which he makes first rate work; as for hieroglyphical inscriptions, if he only made squeezes other people could work them out. It is a mere suggestion which I make here; I should not like Petrie to think that I wish to underrate what he is doing. I give a great importance to [...] being on good terms with him, as it has been the case since I made his acquaintance; but on the other hand I believe that it is a vital question for the Fund that whatever we publish should be as correct as possible'.¹⁰

However, in 1886, after Petrie resigned from the Fund, it was probably a slight hint of jealousy as well as the awareness of his own limits that led Naville to write the following words to Poole: 'I consider that the English public is much more interested in Petrie's work than in mine. I do not feel the least jealous about it; I consider it as quite natural. He is an Englishman, I a foreigner. He makes exhibitions of what he finds; I make none. He is more archaeologist than I am. I believe he is a great loss to the Fund'.¹¹

Nevertheless, there is one point in which Naville outmatches Petrie and this is surely the quality of his plates. The hieroglyphic inscriptions are of the highest level; actually these drawings were mostly not Edouard's work, but that of his less well-known wife, Marguerite, who assisted him on his excavations in Lower and in Upper Egypt. Indeed, she wrote the notebooks and took many photographs during the fieldwork, some now kept by the family and some in the Musée d'Art et d'Histoire in Geneva and mostly unpublished.¹²

SCIENTIFIC CORRESPONDENCE AS AN HISTORICAL SOURCE

It thus becomes clear that Naville's correspondence (and this kind of material in general) represents a fascinating source of information, not only because of its archaeological content but also by improving our knowledge about people and the countries involved in the exchange, in Egypt as well as in Europe.

Edouard Naville, as an employee of the Fund, had to explain his choices of the places to excavate, the collaborators to hire and also to justify the cost of his journeys. As a consequence, his letters seldom contained details about daily life in Egypt, the beautiful landscapes or his family life. On the other hand, Naville did not hesitate to include gossip about other Egyptologists in Egypt or in Europe.

One can also notice the gradual difference in the letters to the different addressees. At the beginning, Naville felt deeply grateful to Amelia Edwards for hiring him. In a letter sent to Gaston Maspero in 1881, he wrote, 'Certainly, the most active Egyptologist in England, this is Miss Edwards.' But then, as Edwards was getting closer to Petrie, especially on the subject of the finds to be brought to Great Britain, Naville showed his disappointment in the letters he wrote to Reginald Poole, as for instance, in 1887: 'Of course I tell you that privately, do not read it to Miss Edwards whose admiration for Petrie is daily growing [...] Please to keep this letter for yourself, or better to destroy it after having read it'.¹³

Poole mostly supported Naville's work, and we sense from the letters that the Swiss scholar had more confidence in his judgment than in that of Edwards.

To have an accurate idea of the relations between these scholars, it is essential to read other surviving correspondence, such as the letters of Edwards and Poole held in Geneva and also in the Petrie archive at the Griffith Institute in Oxford.

The scientific correspondence can be analysed by looking at two main topics: first, as a direct, vivid and mostly trustworthy source of information on methods, scholarly sociability, results and projects and daily intellectual work, and, second, following the historiographic approach used by present-day scholars, the letters bear witness to the history of Egyptology and archaeology. Furthermore, the thoughts, interpretations and dilemmas of the authors may also find an echo in every personal career.

CONCLUSION

This study of the archived letters is very much a work in progress but already it has identified much information about Naville's fieldwork, his collaborators and the monuments he discovered. The letter transcriptions have already revealed, for instance, a better understanding of Naville's relationship with Petrie, which cannot just be summed up as a constant fight between the two. Further research will include the contemporary letters written by Naville to Gaston Maspero that are held in the Institut de France, Paris.

Since the content and tone of the words he uses differ from one addressee to another, studying all the letters will improve our knowledge about the relations between Naville and his European colleagues. Furthermore, Naville being the only Swiss scholar of his time working in Egypt, his letters express a very singular point of view about the English and the French regarding their respective archaeological, diplomatic, and political influence in Egypt at the end of the 19th century.

Notes

- 1 Virenque, H. (2013) 'Letters from the Delta: Edouard Naville and the EEF'. *Egyptian Archaeology* 42, 12–13.
- 2 Brugsch, H. (1875) *L'Exode et les monuments égyptiens: discours prononcé à l'occasion du Congrès international d'orientalistes à Londres*. Leipzig, J. C. Hinrichs.
- 3 EES Lucy Gura Archive V.c.04.
- 4 Bierbrier, M. L. (ed.) (2012) *Who was who in Egyptology*, 4th edn. London, Egypt Exploration Society, pp. 268–69.
- 5 EES Lucy Gura Archive V.c.6.
- 6 (Naville 1891, pl. LIV).
- 7 EES Lucy Gura Archive V.c.7.
- 8 EES Lucy Gura Archive V.c.24.
- 9 Drower, M. (1985) *Flinders Petrie. A life in Archaeology*. London, V. Gollancz, pp. 274–94.
- 10 EES Lucy Gura Archive V.d.12.
- 11 EES Lucy Gura Archive V.d.19.
- 12 Chappaz 2013, Maurice-Naville, Naville and Eggly-Naville, 2014 (See Bibliography).
- 13 EES Lucy Gura Archive V.e.20].

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Ulrich Jasper Seetzen

Carsten Walbiner

For our knowledge of the situation in Greater Syria and Egypt at the beginning of the 19th century, we owe much to two men who must be regarded as failed explorers – at least in relation to their self-proclaimed goals – and tragic heroes. Johann Ludwig Burckhardt and Ulrich Jasper Seetzen (Fig. 16.1) wanted to explore the inner parts of Africa, but never reached their destinations. In preparation of their expeditions to the heart of the black continent, they spent long years in the Arab world where both found their untimely deaths. Their observations in Syria, Egypt and Arabia secured them places of honour amongst the great travellers and explorers. Appropriately, Yehoshua Ben-Arieh describes them in his study ‘The Rediscovery of the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century’ as ‘outstanding personalities’ who ‘well deserve the title of pioneers of Palestine research’ and he regards their observations as ‘cornerstones of the scientific exploration of the Holy Land’.¹ And this judgment holds true also for the other regions that the two men explored and described.

But while Burckhardt became a well-known and often quoted authority, Seetzen remains today relatively unknown, a fact lamented by the famous geographer Carl Ritter.² This might be due to the publication history of Seetzen’s diaries. While Burckhardt wrote in English and published part of his observations himself, Seetzen could not arrange for the printing of his notes with the exception of a few articles.³ After his death, his diaries remained in manuscript for more than four decades and were only published in the middle of the 19th century.⁴ By then, they had lost the appeal of being ‘fresh news’ and had to compete with an ever increasing number of publications about the Near East. Furthermore, they were written in German and never translated into English or French and this, too, limited their distribution.

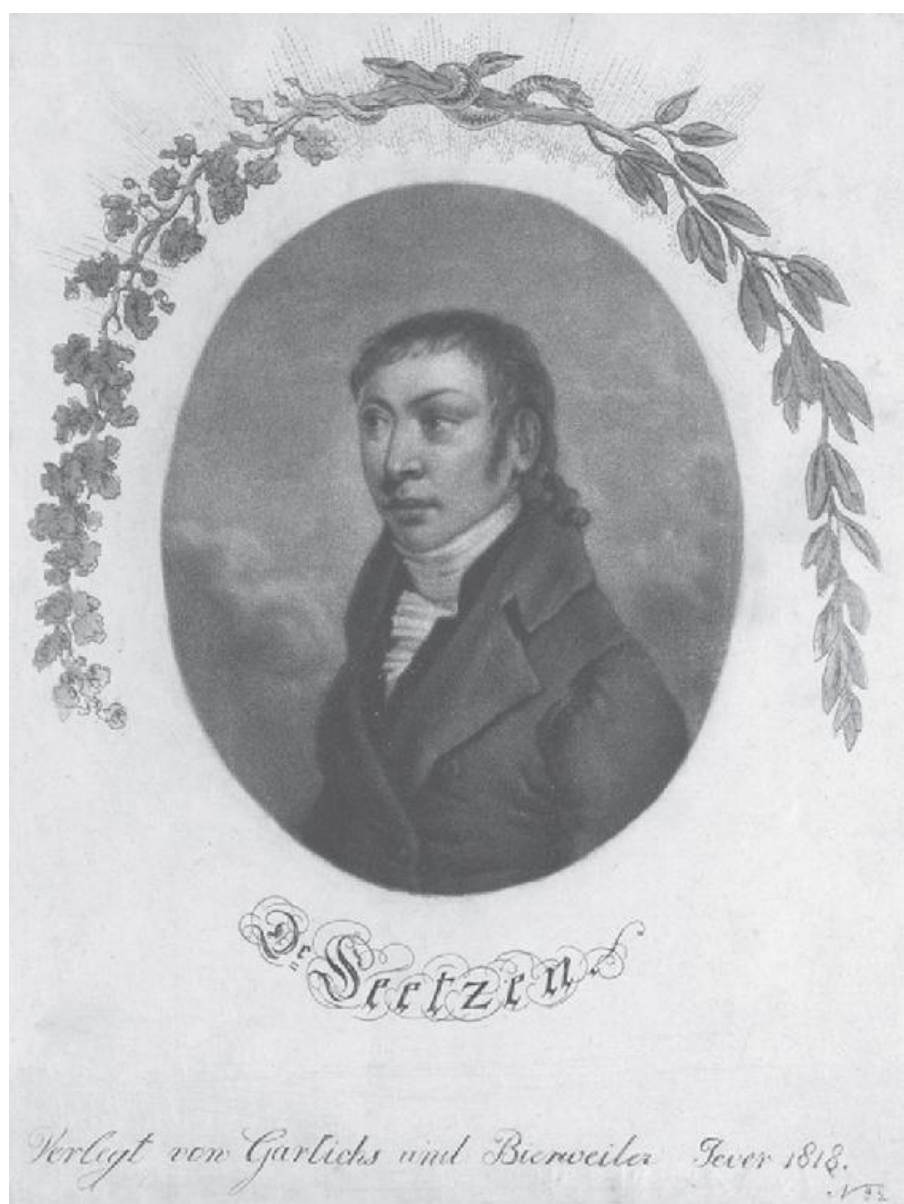


Figure 16.1: Dr Seetzen, mezzotint engraving published by Garlachs and Bierweiler, Jever 1818 (Stadtmuseum Oldenburg, XX/1548/24:, by courtesy of the owner).

For unknown reasons, the editor did not include the first part of Seetzen's diaries – depicting the journey from Germany through the Balkans to Istanbul and from there to Aleppo – in the first edition and excluded likewise the description of the one and a half years he spent in the latter city. Only recently have the missing parts appeared.⁵

In this essay, I will concentrate on the Aleppo diaries covering the period from 23 November 1803 to 9 April 1805.

To begin with, it would be helpful to give a short biography of Seetzen.⁶ He was born in 1767 as the son of a wealthy farmer in the North German dominion of Jever which belonged from 1797 to 1807 to Russia. He studied at Göttingen University, with medicine as his main subject, but he also included natural sciences and technology. The great scholar Blumenbach, who is regarded as one of the founders of zoology and anthropology as scientific subjects, was among his tutors. Seetzen was – together with the famous Humboldt and others – a founding member of the Göttingische Physikalische Gesellschaft. On completing his studies, Seetzen did not enter academia, but worked as an administrator and private entrepreneur – he describes himself as a ‘wood dealer and factory owner’.⁷

Seetzen who was – to use his own words – ‘enthusiastically inclined to travelling’ developed a plan for an East–West crossing of Africa, a journey in which he saw ‘an immeasurable field for his eagerness for knowledge’.⁸ Seetzen set out on his journey as a private traveller without an official mission, but he secured some funding from the Archduke of Gotha, who commissioned him to acquire books and artefacts for an Oriental Museum that was to be established in Gotha. Also, the Russian Tsar, of whom Seetzen was a subject because the dominion of Jever had fallen to Russia in 1797, awarded him a yearly allowance.

Seetzen had recognised that it would only be possible to reach his goals when travelling in disguise.⁹ This made it imperative to get well acquainted with Oriental manners and the languages of the East, at the least Arabic. Therefore, he decided to spend a preparatory period in Aleppo, the North Syrian commercial centre where the well-established European community of merchants and consuls could facilitate such an undertaking by providing the newcomer with the necessary assistance. (Seetzen was followed in his approach by Burckhardt, who also spent more than a year in Aleppo.)

Seetzen arrived in Aleppo on 23 November 1803. There, he was given a warm welcome from the Europeans. During his first days in town, he met with all the diplomatic representatives¹⁰ and developed a friendship with the English Consul John Barker (1771–1848). Seetzen found lodgings with a Levantine family of mixed Armenian and Maronite origin. The initial enthusiasm for his host family and his quarters did not last, and he changed accommodation after a serious discord.¹¹

On 1 December, Seetzen began taking Arabic lessons with the son of his landlady.¹² It seems that the progress he made was relatively slow as he relates on 28 November 1804 – and a year after starting his lessons – that he still did not possess ‘great skills in speaking Arabic’ which would prevent him from more frequent and longer discussions

with his bookseller.¹³

Seetzen also soon began to practise medicine, mainly for the Europeans in Aleppo, and he sometimes received remuneration for his services.¹⁴

All in all, he led a contemplative life in Aleppo. As an alternative to his daily routine, he attended the occasional 'Asemblies' organised by the consuls and a few merchants, and made several trips into the countryside. But, in general, Seetzen was 'tremendously satisfied' with his existence in Aleppo, where his 'time was divided between the study of Arabic, botanical excursions and occasional medical visits'.¹⁵

Having recognised that the strange costume worn by the Europeans was the reason for occasional insults from the indigenous population,¹⁶ Seetzen began to wear 'Arab' clothing 'like a local janissary'.¹⁷ While the Franks of Aleppo abstained from visiting the coffee shops, Seetzen regarded this 'as especially necessary, if one wants to get acquainted with the manners, ideas and conversations of the middle and low classes of people'.¹⁸ But as mentioned, his limited command of Arabic made it difficult for him to fully benefit from such visits. Also, in terms of music, Seetzen felt at home in Aleppo as he developed a gusto for 'the music of the Levant', although he did not like it in the beginning.¹⁹

Seetzen naturally took a special interest in trade and commerce. Soon after his arrival, he started collecting information on business, especially the trade routes, and learned that 'the trade of Aleppo is [...] momentarily not big'.²⁰ He notes the economic decline of the city and the pauperisation of its population, makes remarks on the European 'trading houses' and the commerce with Europe and provides data on local business and trade.²¹ His listing of commodity prices offers proof of the tremendous rise in prices during the period of his stay.²²

Seetzen also paid attention to politics. He became an eyewitness to the 'revolution', the joint rebellion of the city's inhabitants and janissaries against the newly appointed Ottoman Pasha which lasted for nearly a year between July 1804 and June 1805.²³ The battles that were partly fought in the streets of Aleppo caused much sorrow for the population who greatly suffered from the violence and associated hunger. Seetzen comments on various occasions about this 'hurdle of the current constitution'.²⁴ A supra-regional event that was reflected upon by Seetzen in his Aleppo diary was the advance of the Wahhabi resurrection.²⁵

During several excursions inside and outside the city of Aleppo (Fig. 16.2), Seetzen collected a great deal of material on the flora and fauna of the region as well as on its topography and antiquities.²⁶ Since this is the usual business of an explorer, I will abstain from going into

details. I would prefer to focus attention on some reflections of this traveller which help to understand his *Weltanschauung* (world view) better, to learn what distinguishes him from so many who described the Near East before and after him. By this, I mean his view of religion in general and the religious communities he encountered in Aleppo in particular.

Before looking at Seetzen's perception of the different religious groups, it is worth mentioning that he had in general a very high opinion on the people living in the East and was far from ascribing any superiority to the European races. He remarks, 'Neither the local population nor the other inhabitants of the Turkish Empire are lacking of excellent natural aptitudes; and I'm convinced that they are by no means inferior to the Europeans.'²⁷ That European products were partly of a greater perfection is not attributed to a lack of talent but a lack of demand.²⁸ And Seetzen makes no difference concerning the religious affiliation: 'The Ottomans – be it Mohammedans, Christians or Jews – do not lack vigor (*Tätigkeit*) and talent'.²⁹ As positive character traits, he mentions domesticity (*Häuslichkeit*), love for the family, soberness (as related to drinking), diligence and vigour.³⁰ But as Seetzen was not an enthusiastic admirer of the Orient, he also describes the deficiencies he encountered in the 'character of the local inhabitants', which he mainly interpreted as a result of the ruling political system that exercises 'a very negative influence on the character of its subjects'.³¹ Amongst these negative traits, he mentions breach of promise, over-reaching others, flattery, tardiness as a debtor and intolerance as a creditor.³² Furthermore, he remarks for example that 'the Levantine Mohammedans normally condemn in their hearts everyone who does not belong to them'.³³

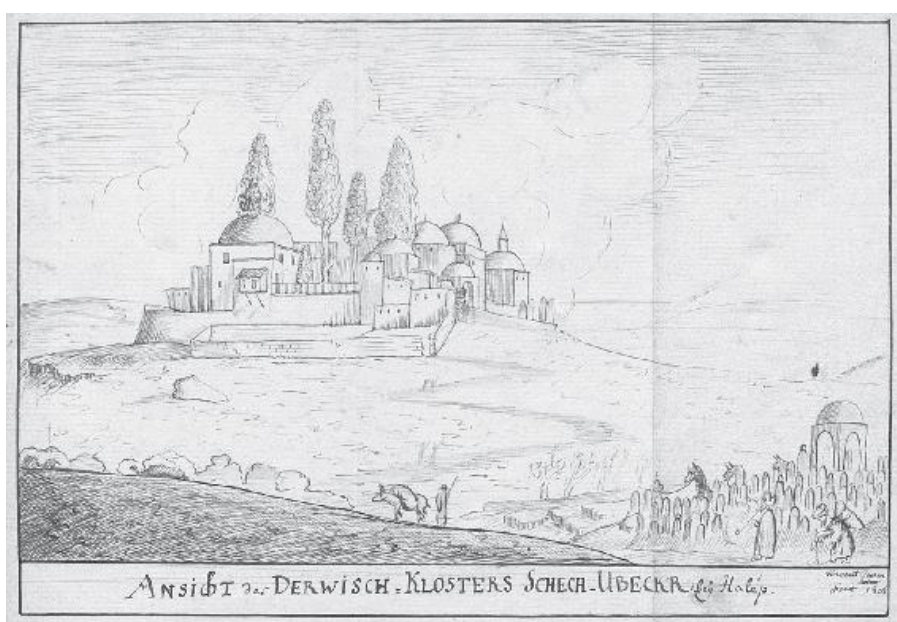


Figure 16.2: Ansicht des Derwisch-Klosters Schech-Ubeckr bey Halép (*View of the dervish convent Schech-Ubeckr [Sheikh Abu Bakr] near Aleppo*), drawing by Vincent Germain in Seetzen's *Aleppo diary* (MS Oldenburg, Landesbibliothek, Cim I 88h:5, fol. 7r; by courtesy of the owner).

The living together of the different religious groups was marked by suspicion and refusal. Seetzen observed that ‘the Rajah’s’ – the local non-Muslims – entertain ‘such a hatred and disgust against everything that is related to the Mohammedan religion and tradition, that they never take the trouble to read such things as they assume that nothing intelligent can be said in them. Against Mohammed they are unreasonably prepossessed without analyzing the reasons why they elevate the founder of their religion so much over him.’³⁴ For Seetzen, Islam is ‘as good as many of our Christian sects’.³⁵

The Oriental Christians were, for Seetzen, first of all characterised by bigotry.³⁶ Like the Jews, they behaved well and were careful in their speech to the point of showing an exaggerated timidity.³⁷ ‘This is the result of their relations with the Turks who have all power in their hands,’ Seetzen explains with good insight.³⁸ (A precise description of an attitude called ‘dhimmitude’). Seetzen points out the cultural achievements that the local Christians had made – the establishment of libraries and printing shops³⁹ for example – but he also comments on the partly striking ignorance of the clergy.⁴⁰ Very remarkable for a non-Catholic representative of the Enlightenment is Seetzen’s praise of the Roman Catholic Propaganda Fide and its intellectual activities.⁴¹

Regarding the Jews, whose general behaviour was described as being similar to Christians, Seetzen laments their difficult fate and

pleads strongly for giving them equal rights.⁴² 'It is horrible,' he says, 'how the Levantines hate the Jews in their hearts and which stories they invent to nourish that hatred'.⁴³ And he goes on, remarking that the local Christians believed that the Jews could not celebrate Passover without slaughtering a Christian in order to sprinkle the paschal lamb with the blood or even to eat it with the meat of the lamb.⁴⁴ This libel about blood was well known in Europe and some authors argue that it was imported from there to the East at the time of the famous Damascus affair in 1840.⁴⁵ Seetzen's observations – he reports also on a concrete accusation that was brought up against the Jews during his visit⁴⁶ – show that this libel existed in the Arab lands before the Damascus incident. But Seetzen did not only criticise the Oriental Christians and Muslims for their hate and exclusion of the Jews, but also asked 'Why are they not allowed to enjoy civil liberty and equal rights with the Christians everywhere in Europe?'⁴⁷

To sum up, the last remarks clearly show that Seetzen was a truly enlightened figure. Regarding Europe's attitude towards the Arab world, he took a central position. As an enlightened freemason, he was free of religious prejudices; as a man who still belonged in his thinking to the 18th century – as Birgit Schäßler put it⁴⁸ – he had no colonialist or imperialist ideas that would soon prevail in the Western approach to the Eastern world. But he was also not an enthusiast who closed his eyes to the deficiencies of the countries that he travelled through. This makes him a forerunner of an objective approach towards the history and reality of the Middle East that has become prevalent in modern science.

But what is regarded nowadays as modern and appropriate was seen differently by Seetzen's contemporaries. Consul Barker, a man of the new age, a representative of colonialism and *Realpolitik*, renders the following judgement on Seetzen in a letter to the British Consul-General at Constantinople which I have left until the end of my paper because it also hints at the tragic dimension of Seetzen's life:

I particularly lament the untimely fate of poor Seetzen [sic!], as I had many opportunities of admiring his zeal and great abilities during a residence of three years at Aleppo preparatory to undertaking his perilous travels in Africa and Arabia. With the deepest knowledge that books can confer, and the warmest zeal for the extension of the limits of science, he was rendered quite unfit for a traveller among barbarians by his total ignorance of the world and a want of promptitude and address in the common occurrences of real life'.⁴⁹

Notes

- 1 Yehoshua Ben-Arieh (1979) *The Rediscovery of the Holy Land in the Nineteenth Century*. Jerusalem and Detroit, pp. 31, 43.
- 2 *Ibid.*, p. 36.
- 3 For some published letters sent from Aleppo see 'Fortgesetzte Reise-

- Nachrichten des Dr U. J. Seetzen', *Monatliche Correspondenz zur Beförderung der Erd- und Himmels-Kunde*, vol. 11 (Gotha, 1805), pp. 360–67; 'Fortgesetzte Reise-Nachrichten des Dr U. J. Seetzen, *Monatliche Correspondenz zur Beförderung der Erd- und Himmels-Kunde*, vol. 12 (Gotha, 1805), pp. 57–73, 234–241; 'Aus einem Briefe des Kammer-Assesors Dr Seetzen an seinen Bruder, Pfarrer in Heppens', *ibid.*, pp. 341–47.
- 4 Fr[iedrich] Kruse (ed.) (1854–55) *Ulrich Jasper Seetzens Reisen durch Syrien, Palästina, Phönicien, die Transjordan-Länder, Arabia Petraea und Unter-Aegypten*, 3 vols. Berlin. On the editorial history of the publication of Seetzen's diaries see Fr[iedrich] Kruse, 'Vorrede und Einleitung zu Seetzens Reisetagebüchern in den Orient', in Kruse (ed.), *Ulrich Jasper Seetzen's Reisen*, pp. XLVII–LXXV; Klaus-Peter Müller, 'Seetzeniana in Nordwestdeutschland. Quellen zu Ulrich Jasper Seetzen und zur Edition seiner Tagebücher', in *Ulrich Jasper Seetzen (1767–1811) – Leben und Werk. Die arabischen Länder und die Nahostforschung im napoleonischen Zeitalter. Vorträge des Kolloquiums vom 23. und 24. September 1994 in der Forschungs- und Landesbibliothek Gotha, Schloß Friedenstein* (Gotha, 1995), pp. 77–102.
 - 5 Ulrich Jasper Seetzen (2011) *Tagebuch des Aufenthalts in Aleppo 1803–1805*. Hildesheim, Zürich, New York; Ulrich Jasper Seetzen (2012) *Tagebuch des Aufenthalts in Konstantinopel und der Reise nach Aleppo 1802–1803*. Hildesheim, Zürich, New York.
 - 6 On Seetzen's life and work in more detail see Kruse, 'Vorrede und Einleitung', pp. III–XLVI; *Ulrich Jasper Seetzen (1767–1811) – Leben und Werk*; Klaus-Peter Müller, 'Ulrich Jasper Seetzen, Forschungsreisender (1767–1811)', in Dagmar Freist and Wolfgang Erich Müller (eds) (2009) *Geistesblitze. Forscher, Erfinder und Gelehrte aus dem Oldenburger*. Oldenburg, pp. 26–31; Detlef Haberland, 'Ulrich Jasper Seetzen – Ein Leben für eine Forschungsreise in den Vorderen Orient und auf die Arabische Halbinsel', in Seetzen, *Tagebuch des Aufenthalts in Aleppo*, pp. XIII–XL.
 - 7 Kruse, 'Vorrede und Einleitung', p. X.
 - 8 From Seetzen's original [travel] plan (*Originalplan*), quoted in Kruse, 'Vorrede und Einleitung', p. XVIII.
 - 9 *Ibid.*
 - 10 For Seetzen's first days in Aleppo see *Tagebuch des Aufenthalts in Aleppo*, pp. 3–10.
 - 11 On Seetzen's lodging(s) in Aleppo and his host families see *ibid.*, pp. 5f., 134, 136, 150, 283.
 - 12 *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 14.
 - 13 *Ibid.*, p. 248. On Seetzen's efforts in learning Arabic see also Hans Stein, 'Seetzens Bemühungen um Aneignung und Wiedergabe der arabischen Sprache', in *Ulrich Jasper Seetzen (1767–1811) – Leben und Werk*, pp. 53–64.
 - 14 *Tagebuch des Aufenthalts in Aleppo*, pp. 18, 66, 84, 87f., 99f.
 - 15 *Ibid.*, p. 95.
 - 16 *Ibid.*, p. 82.
 - 17 *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 8f., 145.
 - 18 *Ibid.*, p. 251.
 - 19 *Ibid.*, p. 108.
 - 20 *Ibid.*, pp. 13–15.
 - 21 *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 13–15, 98, 175f.
 - 22 *Ibid.*, pp. 247f., 255.
 - 23 On the political events in Aleppo in 1804–05 see Herbert L. Bodman (1963) *Political Factions in Aleppo, 1760–1826*. Chapel Hill, pp. 122–25.
 - 24 *Tagebuch des Aufenthalts in Aleppo*, pp. 129–33, 145f., 177.

- 25 *Ibid.*, pp. 13, 64, 190–92, 265f.
- 26 *Ibid.*, pp. 43–49 (tour around the city), 111–20 (trip to ‘Baballa’), 154–74 (trip to ‘Sfireh’ and ‘Dschabúl’).
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 71.
- 28 *Ibid.*, p. 72.
- 29 *Ibid.*, pp. 273f.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p. 129.
- 31 *Ibid.*, pp. 128f.
- 32 *Ibid.*, p. 128.
- 33 *Ibid.*, p. 52.
- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 48.
- 35 *Ibid.*, p. 63.
- 36 *Ibid.*, p. 72.
- 37 *Ibid.*
- 38 *Ibid.*
- 39 *Ibid.*, pp. 211, 277–79.
- 40 See for example the anecdote on ‘The monk from Lebanon’, *ibid.*, pp. 139–41.
- 41 *Ibid.*, p. 62.
- 42 *Ibid.*, pp. 50–52.
- 43 *Ibid.*, p. 50.
- 44 *Ibid.*, p. 52.
- 45 On the Damascus affair see Carsten Walbiner, ‘The Damascus affair of 1840 – a case of inter-communitarian conflict in Ottoman Syria?’, in Salim Daccache, Carla Edde, Stefan Knost, Bruno Paoli and Souad Slim (eds), *Cohabitation et conflits dans le Bilâd al-Châm à l’époque ottomane. Musulmans et chrétiens à travers les écrits des chroniqueurs et des voyageurs* (Beirut, 2014), pp. 269–82 and the literature mentioned there.
- 46 *Tagebuch des Aufenthalts in Aleppo*, pp. 97f.
- 47 *Ibid.*, p. 98.
- 48 Birgit Schäbler, ‘Ulrich Jasper Seetzen (1767–1811):Jeveraner Patriot, aufgeklärter Kosmopolit und Orientreisender, in *Ulrich Jasper Seetzen (1767–1811) – Leben und Werk*, pp. 113–34, at 114.
- 49 John Barker (2005) *Syria and Egypt under the last five Sultans of Turkey*, vol. 1. New York; reprint of the 1876 edition, (London), p. 281.

Every Traveller Needs a Compass

Ronald E. Zitterkopf

The compass holds a special, almost mystical, significance for many travellers. A compass evokes emotions of exploration, adventure, excitement and peril. Notwithstanding that it was one of the most important, if not *the* most important, navigational devices ever invented, those employing the compass as a necessary instrument in their travels, such as the explorer or investigator making technical observations, still needed additional implements for the success of their expeditions.

Napoleon's 1798–1801 expedition to Egypt brought increased attention to the country and a subsequent heightened interest in travel there. In the immediate decades thereafter, until approximately the end of the 1830s, what instruments were in those early travellers' kits and how did they utilise them? Although what follows is a discussion centered on Egypt, it would also pertain generally to travel throughout the Near East.

The early 19th-century terminology for such apparatus was mathematical or philosophical instruments. The terms 'scientist' and 'scientific instrument' did not come into common usage in the English language until later in the century. Any apparatus designed to make measurements and with a mathematical principle in its construction was termed a mathematical instrument. These instruments were used by mathematical practitioners for such functions as navigation, telling the time and surveying – and also included instruments used in the fields of geometry and trigonometry, such as rulers, dividers, compasses and protractors. Likewise, those who investigated natural phenomena were known as natural philosophers. Consequently, a device used for experimentation and teaching was referred to as a philosophical instrument or philosophical apparatus. The terms 'scientist' and 'scientific instrument' did not come into common usage in the English language until later. Philosophical instruments included

apparatus such as telescopes, microscopes, thermometers, and barometers.

To those of us fascinated by the instruments that travellers to Egypt may have used in the first decades of the 19th century, there are limited references. The primary source for advice to the early travellers was likely by word of mouth from previous travellers, which leaves no written record. There are, however, the surviving journals and letters of travellers, which occasionally mention the kit considered necessary for their travels and work. An early, published source in English was a paragraph (prepared in 1831) contained in Appendix A of John Gardner Wilkinson's 1835 edition of *Topography of Thebes and General View of Egypt*.

'I shall merely point out the most necessary: as a camp-bedstead, bedding, and mosquito curtain; a camp stool and drawing table; umbrella, double or lined; drawing paper, pencils, and Indian-rubber; ... For observations, a sextant and artificial horizon, or rather Captain Rater's repeating circle, chronometer, large and small telescope, siphon barometer, thermometers, &c. with a good measuring tape. Every instrument should be, when it is possible, of the same materials throughout, wood and metal ill according with the heat of an Egyptian climate; and in their cases nails answer better than glue. ... In visiting the catacombs ... he must not omit wax candles or torches, a rope, and (if he intends to take measurements of the architectural details) a short ladder'.

Another intriguing source is contained in the papers of George Bellas Greenough, a geologist and geographer who was a Fellow of the Royal Society, first Chairman of the Geological Society of London and a founding member of the forerunner of the Royal Geographical Society. Greenough exhibited a talent for gathering and collating information and a passion for making this information available, primarily for the geological maps and books for which he is most widely known. Although he undertook numerous trips in Europe, Greenough never visited Egypt or the Middle East. His earlier stated intentions to travel to Egypt¹ were never fulfilled and he died in Naples on his first attempt to visit Constantinople and the East.² Nevertheless, he had maintained a frequent communication with his friends and colleagues travelling to Egypt and the Middle East. In his papers are numerous notes and commentaries, both from his own experience and as gleaned from fellow travellers.

These records appear to be the basis of a planned book. In the Greenough papers is a bound volume, embossed with *Traveller's Manual*³ on the spine. Unfortunately, this never came to fruition as the contents consist only of a partly written (by hand) draft, not even close to completion. The table of contents shows that the projected matter for inclusion was meant to be intensive and comprehensive, providing a wide-ranging list of advice for the contemporary traveller

that today offers a view of the information considered meaningful at that time. As a representative sample, topics listed are: books; letters of introduction; sample contracts; table of longitudes and latitudes; calculating distance by the rate of travel of horses or camels; copying inscriptions; Turkish calendar; and customs duties payable in England on the return.

The *Traveller's Manual* included several chapters on recommended instruments that the traveller should take, depending on whether the traveller's purpose was navigation and surveying or more specialised endeavours such as geological, botanical, zoological, or entomological studies. Greenough recommended several of the quality instrument makers of the day, including Troughton & Simms, Charles Schmalcalder, William & Samuel Jones, and John Frederick Newman.

Greenough even had plans for several chapters of sample calculations using those instruments; examples of headings in his own words are:

- to measure the altitude of sun moon or any star
- to measure an inaccessible distance from two stations when its extremities may be seen
- to measure the height of an accessible object such as a tower & by geometry
- to measure the height of a tower standing on a rock

Some of these intended calculations correspond to those previously published in George Adams' *Geometrical and Graphical Essays*,⁴ which was a reference book often carried by travellers to the Middle East and mentioned several times in the *Traveller's Manual*. This endeavour by Adams also describes numerous devices available in Europe at the time of publishing. It includes a catalogue of mathematical and philosophical instruments made and sold by George Adams. A somewhat later work, an 1836 publication by Simms entitled *A Treatise on the Principal Mathematical Instruments Employed, in Surveying, Levelling and Astronoms*⁵ details instruments of that period and their use, including as an appendix a catalogue of instruments made by Troughton & Simms and their prices.

Greenough's *Traveller's Manual* and his notes,⁶ as well as numerous other journals and letters of the time and Wilkinson's 1835 edition of *Topography of Thebes and General View of Egypt* suggest plausible instruments that a contemporary traveller might use in Egypt. In addition to this general list, those engaged in special studies such as geology or botany would require additional instruments specific to their work, such as a microscope.

The compass, sextant and chronometer were the standard navigational instruments of the age. The compass was used to calculate the heading or direction; the sextant to establish latitude; and the chronometer to determine the time so as to calculate the longitude.

The compasses of the era were of the magnetic type – containing a magnetic needle that aligns with the magnetic poles of the earth – thus providing a relatively accurate measurement of the heading of a direction of travel. When considered necessary, the magnetic direction could be adjusted to true north through the application of the Earth's magnetic declination of the time and place. In addition to their use for navigational purposes, the more specialised compasses enabled the making of maps by measuring the bearing of geographical landmarks and horizontal angles. The surveyor's compass, or circumferentor, with its sighting vanes was mounted on a tripod. Unlike travelling by sea, travelling on land required portability, which resulted in the manufacture of smaller and lighter compasses. Some compasses became small enough to fit in a pocket. These included the prismatic compass, an instrument fitted with a viewing prism that permitted simultaneous sighting and the measuring of a heading.

The sextant, usually constructed in brass, enabled an observer to view the Sun, or a star, and the horizon (the surface of the Earth) at the same time through the use of a mirror. A scale on the sextant showed the angle between the Sun or star and the horizon, which was used to compute the latitude. At sea, the surface of the water makes a constant sphere from the location of the instrument to the horizon. Most usually, travellers to Egypt did their work on land, where the surface of the spheroid is not flat. In order to use the sextant on land, an artificial horizon had to be created, that is, a level surface which was parallel to the natural horizon and from which observations could be made. The best substance that would give a smooth, flat, reflecting surface was mercury, which was much more functional than water (Fig. 17.1). The mercury was placed in a flat trough covered by a triangular, roof-like box with slanting slides of glass to prevent the wind from disturbing the surface during the making of observations. The sextant measured the angle between the celestial object and its reflected image, which is double the angle of the Sun or star above the natural horizon.



Figure 17.1: An Artificial Horizon made by Thomas Jones, 62 Charing Cross Road, London, c. 1836



Figure 17.2: A Plane Table with sight vane made by W & SJones, Holborn, London, c. 1801–1830.

A chronometer is the term for a precise timepiece. It determined longitude on the basis that the Earth rotates once every 24 hours. Thus, the observer located at a parallel of latitude sees approximately the same sky regardless of the east-west longitude of location. The time of local noon (the maximum altitude of the Sun at the observer's location) was compared to a chronometer set to the time of the prime meridian (0 degrees longitude). The 360-degree circle of longitude in 24 hours yields a rotation of 15 degrees per hour, allowing a calculation converting difference in time to degrees of longitude. The main requirements for the land travellers were accuracy and the portability of the chronometer.

In addition to those for navigation, other instruments and tools were considered necessary. A primary need was to measure distance. Shorter distances, such as at an antiquity site, were measured by a tape measure or chain, not much different than current practice. The Gunter's chain was developed specifically for land measurement. It

consisted of 100 heavy wire links amounting to 66 ft. An area 66 ft by 66 ft equates to $\frac{1}{10}$ of an acre and 80 chains is equivalent to one mile. A variation often used by the travellers was the engineer's chain, which also consisted of 100 loops, but was 100 ft in length. Steel tapes of varying length were also employed, such as 25, 50, or 100 ft. The term 'chain' persists to the present day as steel tapes may still be referred to as chains.

As an expedient, many of the period sketches were based on a human's pace – in a manner still practised today. For example, a structure might be 14 paces wide by 10 paces deep. Measurements using the length of the pace were used to provide a rough scale drawing and the pace length was often noted on the sketch for the reader's convenience.

Long distances could also be scaled from maps. In the absence of adequate maps, the distance between two places was determined by measuring the latitude and longitude of the two positions and calculating the distance between them. For those intermediate distances that were too short for celestial observations and too long for a measurement by chain, studies on the rate of travel of a camel began in the Middle East in the late 18th century⁷ and this procedure was commonly used in Egypt during the 19th century. Journals often record departure and arrival time to the minute in order to increase the precision of the calculation – which was another use of the chronometer. A combination of a compass bearing and a distance measurement provided the basic tool for mapping a journey in the desert. Thus, one sees many sketches of routes recorded with the compass bearing and distances calculated from the camel's rate. Maps of larger areas made using this information were adjusted by measurements of latitude and longitude.



Figure 17.3: A Mountain Barometer made by William Cary, 181 Strand, London, mid 19th century.

It was the theodolite that was considered the most important of

surveying instruments. It consisted of a movable telescope and usually included a compass for orientation at its base. The theodolite measured not only the horizontal angle between the instrument and two points, but also a vertical angle or angle of elevation. Both axes of a theodolite had graduated circles. The diameter of the horizontal circle gave the size of the instrument; 5, 6, or 7 inches were commonly recommended, although the larger sizes hindered portability. Advances in machine tool engineering had resulted in more accurate scales, both for the theodolite and sextant. An increased level of precision in the measurement of angles was obtained by use of a vernier scale (earlier called a nonius), which was an additional scale that indicated where the measurement lay between two of the gradations on the main scale. This allowed readings to be made to fractions of degrees or minutes. The sighting of a location or feature was facilitated by getting an assistant to mark the desired point of measurement with a stave, also called a pole or staff.

The elevation difference between two positions was obtained by setting up the theodolite over one and measuring the angle of elevation or depression to the other. The distance between the two was measured with a chain or tape. This exercise provided one angle and the length of the hypotenuse of a right triangle; the elevation difference was computed using trigonometry.

The plane table is the instrument that really receives insufficient credit. It came into general use before the theodolite and was still in common use in the last 50 years. It was employed to prepare some of the useful maps and site plans made by the early Egyptologists and cartographers, such as John Gardner Wilkinson.

The plane table was a portable instrument used to make a scaled, graphic depiction of a locale (Fig. 17.2). The term 'plane' implies the flat table surface that is so clearly a main component of the instrument, but in early use the spelling was often 'plain table'. The plane table was a rectangular drawing board mounted on a tripod. A large sheet of paper was attached to the top of the board and a sighting mechanism with a ruler rested on the paper. The table was set up over a point, and levelled horizontally with a bubble level. In its simpler form, an alidade (a sighting mechanism with a vane on each end containing a slit or hole for pointing at the target) was used to find the direction of a feature or object and that bearing was marked by drawing a line along the ruler. More advanced plane tables used a telescope for sighting.

The following general procedure was used to produce a plan or map: the user established a base line A-B on the ground and measured its length. A line of the appropriate scale for the desired map was placed on the paper of the plane table to represent the base line. The

plane table was set up over the first point A, and the base line on the paper was aligned with the second point B in the distance. While positioned over A, the user sighted a desired feature (such as the corner of a building, or a tree, etc.) and drew a line using the straight edge. This was repeated for each of the desired features. The plane table was then moved and set up over point B, again aligning the baseline on the paper with the baseline on the ground. From the new location, the first desired feature was again sighted and a line to it was drawn. The intersection of the two lines emanating from the baseline (from the first set-up at A and the subsequent set-up at B) to the first feature was the location on the paper of that first feature in relation to the base line.

Plane table mapping thus used the power of triangulation. The same process was repeated at point B for each of the other desired features, and a line drawn for each to establish the location on the map of each feature. The points were then appropriately connected to draw the outline of the desired building or used to represent the location of geographical features.

Multiple additional set-up points and base lines could be added to provide further details. The geographical area covered could be expanded with more sheets of paper added as needed, provided accurate match lines were used on the paper to align the additional sheets.

The plane table could be used another way to prepare a small site plan. After setting up and levelling the plane table, the direction to a feature was marked on the paper with a straight edge. The distance from the centre of the plane table to the feature was immediately measured with a tape and this distance was transferred to the paper at the appropriate scale. By this method, the drawing was completed with only one set-up because the location of any desired landmark was obtained without the need to move the plane table in order to triangulate its location.

The use of a plane table had advantages over other methods of preparing plans and maps. The plane table was relatively easy to carry into the field and set up. No great skill was needed to use it. It was a graphical way of mapping or drawing an area; no field book was required and, unlike the theodolite, no mathematical calculations were necessary. As the plan or map was drawn during the progression of the survey, errors were minimized. Plotting details were directly checked in the field and thus omissions were immediately obvious.

The primary meteorological instrument was the thermometer, and the primary function for travellers was to measure ambient air temperature. The thermometers consisted of columns of mercury in a glass tube, which were readily susceptible to breakage, and were

generally up to 500 mm in length. During the first half of the 19th century, thermometers of three different scales were available: the Fahrenheit with a scale of freezing to boiling divided into 212 degrees, the Centigrade or Celsius with the same temperature span being divided into 100 degrees, and the Réaumur divided into only 80 degrees. English-made thermometers generally used the Fahrenheit scale, whereas those manufactured on the Continent generally used the Réaumur or Celsius scale. Some travellers' journals recorded temperatures in more than one scale. When the respective F, R, or C designations are not marked in notes, caution needs to be employed to distinguish readings. For example, if a daytime temperature in a desert area was listed as 30 degrees, it could be either Celsius or Réaumur.

If it was necessary to measure great altitude, the use of a theodolite was not practical, so travellers employed meteorological instruments. During this period, the boiling water thermometer was sometimes recommended. The principle was simple: as air pressure decreases with elevation, so the heat required to boil water decreases accordingly, and thus the boiling temperature decreases. If one observed the boiling point at two locations, the difference in boiling points provided data to calculate the differences in elevation. It was a cumbersome means to determine elevation and other methods employing the mountain barometer were more effective.

Barometers were used to predict weather by detecting changes in air pressure. In its simplest form, the stick or pediment barometer was a vertical glass tube approximately 900 mm in length. There were, additionally, a multitude of variations that used a bent tube. In the typical stick barometer, the upper end of the tube was sealed, ensuring a vacuum above the column of mercury below. The lower end was open and immersed in a cistern of mercury. The pressure, or weight, of the air on the open surface of mercury was measured by the rise and fall of the mercury at the top of the tube and read on the adjacent scale.

To determine elevation, mountain barometers worked on this same general principle to determine elevations because air pressure varies with height and temperature (Fig. 17.3). Mercury was used in the mountain barometer and it was not until the mid-century that aneroid (meaning without fluid) barometers became available. In a typical mountain barometer, the barometer (a vertical column of mercury in a glass tube) was attached by a ring and supported on a tripod. For travelling, the barometer was slipped inside a tripod when closed, forming a protective and convenient case for the instrument. Nevertheless, the mountain barometer remained fragile, and the glass case was often broken rendering it unusable.

In practice, the measurement of elevation ideally required two mountain barometers, one at each location for which the difference in height was required. The height of the mercury columns at both stations was then observed at the same time. Additionally, the temperature of the mercury reservoir of each instrument was taken by the attached thermometer and that of the ambient air by the detached thermometer. The elevation difference was then calculated using tables providing the known relations between the densities and elevations, and taking into account both the air pressures measured and the temperatures. Ideally, the observations were made simultaneously at both stations, but to do this, two observers and two barometers and four thermometers were required. When there was only one person, or insufficient barometers or thermometers were available, after making the first measurement the observer hastened to the second station to take the measurements there. If done quickly, and the atmosphere was unchanged at the time, the results were nearly as accurate as if simultaneous observations were made by a barometer and reader at each station.

Taking into account the artificial horizon, thermometers, boiling water thermometers, barometers and mountain barometers, the early travellers carried significant amounts of mercury, commonly called quicksilver. This valuable and costly substance was often handled, and there were many instances of cleaning up spillages as diaries and journals often mention that these instruments breaking. As mercury is now considered a hazardous material, these travellers were fortunate that they didn't have to work under the current environmental and health and safety laws in respect of hazardous materials.

Finally, much of the information gathered from these instruments had to be accurately documented and drawn. Thus, each traveller carried mathematical drawing instruments. There were many possible instruments, but the basic, common kit included drawing pens (of ink and lead), compasses, straight edges and triangles (generally 45 degrees and 30 degrees), scales, parallel rulers, dividers and the all-important protractor.

Common scales were made of wood, often boxwood because of its stability and resistance to warping. Those of better quality were made of brass, or were at least brass edged, and the best were of ivory. The better compasses were made of silver or brass, but with a steel point. They had an interchangeable leg, one to hold ink and the other a lead. They usually had an additional piece to lengthen one leg allowing the drawing of larger circles.

Some of these instruments were quite elaborate compared to what is available today. For example, the protractor could have one or two swinging arms. When one considers the number of compass readings

taken, the protractor was quite important in preparing maps. One often finds drafts of maps with numerous radial lines to assist in transferring the compass bearings.

In addition to the instruments, the travellers also required ancillary items. Camps could include a portable table on which to write and draw, which also required a camp-stool. Paper was a necessity for journals, notes and drawings, and as most paper was linen-rag, its state of preservation is high. Pencils were used and were often encased in brass. However, most of the writing was done in ink, requiring quill pens and inkwells, which were not often considered. Some letters of the day contain apologies that the notes are so rough because they were written sitting on the back of a dromedary while travelling.

Science and technology has changed rapidly and today in the 21st century we have evolved from the compass to high-speed computers, satellite navigation systems and satellite remote sensing and digital photogrammetry. Even our smart phones provide knowledge and information of which the early travellers could not even dream. The future will only bring increasingly rapid advancements. But now the effort is taken out of so much of our travel. We have lost the mystery and intrigue embodied in the compass as well as in its associated contemporary philosophical and mathematical instruments.

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Notes

- 1 For example, Greenough Ms 35/4, f 36r.
- 2 Greenough Ms 24/2. *The Literary Gazette and Journal of Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences* dated April 14, 1855, 234–35.
- 3 Greenough Ms 9/3. Examination of references cited and related material in the Greenough papers suggests that much of the information was likely to have been compiled in the 1820s and 1830s.
- 4 Adams, G. (1791) *Geometrical and Graphical Essays, Containing a Description of the Mathematical Instruments used in Geometry, Civil and Military Surveying, Levelling and Perspective, with Many New Problems, Illustrative of Each Branch*. London.
- 5 Simms, Frederick Walter (1836) *A Treatise on the Principal Mathematical Instruments Employed in Surveying, Levelling and Astronomy: Explaining their*

Construction, Adjustments and Use. With and Appendix and Tables, 2nd ed. London.

6 Greenough Ms 9/2, Ms 9/4, Ms 35/4, f. 7 and f. 87–94.

7 Rennell, James. ‘On the Rate of Travelling, as Performed by Camels, and its Application, as a Scale, to the Purposes of Geography’, *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*. 1 January 1791.